



LUTHERAN EDUCATION

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Lutheran Education

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by Jonathan M. Barz, Editor

The Ends of Lutheran Education

Each fall I begin my Secondary English Methods course with a quotation from Robert Probst: “A philosophy [of teaching] with no implications for practice is only useless, but a collection of activities or techniques with no philosophy to control and direct them may well be dangerous.” My point to these future English teachers is that they need to work out a number of “big questions” about what they believe about the discipline of English and what they are trying to accomplish in teaching it, before they begin to worry about gathering a bunch of activities to fill each 45 minute period. What’s true of teaching English is true of education generally and of Lutheran education specifically.

Too often discussions of education revolve entirely around *means*, ignoring the larger question of *ends*. Neil Postman (1995) sums up this tendency in *The End of Education*: “In considering how to conduct the schooling of our young, adults have two problems to solve. One is an engineering problem; the other, a metaphysical one.” Engineering problems, Postman explains, are “essentially technical,” involving such issues as class size, length of the school day or year, requirements for teacher certification, and the like. These issues matter, but they are peripheral, not central, and their importance is often exaggerated. The “metaphysical problem”—the fundamental question of the reason or core purpose for education—must be resolved first if education is to achieve what he insists is its ultimate end: “to become a different person because of something you have learned—to appropriate an insight, a concept, a vision, so that your world is altered.”

If we add a Christian spin to Postman’s definition of the goal of education, we end up with a useful starting point for this issue of *Lutheran Education*, titled “Toward a Philosophy of Lutheran Education” and dedicated to the belief that the more clearly we articulate the philosophical foundations of Lutheran education, the more likely we are to achieve its goals.

It has often been remarked of Christian art that “Christian” makes a great noun but a lousy adjective. Certainly, using “Lutheran” and “Christian” to modify the noun “education” immediately raises a number of questions, most immediately: What does it mean for education to be Christian, and in what ways is Lutheran Christian education different from secular? One

easy answer is to say that Christian education is Christian simply by virtue of the fact that it is practiced by people who are themselves Christian. There's a certain amount of truth to that definition: Luther's doctrine of vocation insists that everything we do as Christians can be an expression of our faith. In countless ways, Christian teachers live out their faith in whatever classrooms they inhabit, public or Lutheran, in ways that advance God's kingdom. But Lutheran education certainly means more than this.

It's also tempting to regard "Lutheran" as an unnecessary adjective, to say that if we focus on applying the fundamental doctrines of "mere Christianity," we need not worry too much about what might make Lutheran schools distinctive from other Christian schools. Again, there's a certain truth to this: our highest obligation is always to be faithful to God's call rather distinctive in our Lutheran heritage. Bob Toepper's article "Toward a Philosophy of Lutheran Education" essentially takes this tack as he works toward "a contemporary consensus on a philosophy of Christian education for the schools of the LCMS" by articulating core Christian beliefs about the nature of knowledge and reality.

Granted that it is more important to be faithfully Christian than distinctively Lutheran, however, we can only be Christian in a particular way, and the Lutheran inflection of Christian doctrine has distinctive contributions to make. An identifiably Lutheran approach to education will, in fact, differ in important ways from a Reformed, Catholic, or evangelical model (see the January/February 1999 issue of *Lutheran Education* for a discussion of these differences in regard to higher education). To understand this difference, of course, we need to separate "cultural Lutheranism" (who some of us are by virtue of our Germanic heritage and Midwestern roots) from confessional Lutheranism, the core doctrines we believe and confess. Here Russell Moulds makes an essential contribution, answering the question "What's Lutheran in Lutheran teaching?" by examining ten key insights of the Reformation and applying each to the daily life of Lutheran teachers and schools.

My prayer for this issue of *Lutheran Education* is that it would help all of us to think more carefully about the ends of Lutheran education, that we may more consciously and deliberately devote our schools to God's purposes. As Henry David Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, "In the long run men hit only what they aim at. Therefore, though they should fail immediately, they had better aim at something high." Surely, then, it is worth pausing periodically to ponder what exactly we are aiming at. The authors of the following articles help to bring this target into focus.

The good news, however, as we consider the aims of Lutheran education is *the Good News*: through God's grace and the work of the Spirit, we are, in fact, often able to hit what we haven't even thought to aim at. Over and over again, God accomplishes through Lutheran educators far greater ends than those we consciously pursue. Praise God that while we debate the engineering problems of curriculum and dress codes, he continues to work through us to touch lives and win souls.†

Toward a Philosophy of Lutheran Education

Dr. Robert Toepper is a 1962 graduate of Concordia University, River Forest, IL. He earned both the M.A. in history in 1967 and the Ph.D. in social sciences education in 1979 at Washington University, St. Louis, MO. He has taught at Lutheran High School South, St. Louis, and Concordia University, Bronxville, NY. He is currently professor emeritus at Concordia, River Forest, where he has taught social studies and religion methods, foundations of education, history, and economics courses.

While the parishes of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) have sponsored parochial schools since before the Synod's inception in 1847, the Synod, as a church body, has not articulated any official document that resembles a philosophy of Christian education. To be sure, there have been attempts to articulate a Lutheran philosophy of education. For example, Paul Bretscher wrote an essay entitled "Toward a Lutheran Philosophy of Education" that was read in a 1942 plenary session of the Synod's Board for Higher Education. L. G. Bickel and Raymond F. Surburg edited *Readings in the Lutheran Philosophy of Education* (1956), the thirteenth yearbook of the Lutheran Education Association, containing articles by Arthur L. Miller, A. C. Mueller, A. C. Stellhorn, and William Kramer, along with the Bretscher essay. The yearbook also included reprints from various Missouri Synod publications, including *Lutheran Education* and its predecessor, the *Lutheran School Journal*. Alan Hart Jahsmann wrote *What's Lutheran in Education* in 1960. The "Rationale" for the Synod's Mission: Life religion curriculum in 1971, *Foundations for Christian Education* by Frederick A. Meyer and

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Harold W. Rast, and “Toward a Philosophy of Lutheran Education” in *A Curriculum Guide for Lutheran Elementary Schools* (Vols. I, II, & III) in 1964 came closest to serving as an official educational philosophy. However, to date, it appears that there is no contemporary consensus on a document that articulates the Missouri Synod’s philosophy of Christian education.

Therefore, this article is an attempt—and only an attempt at this point—to initiate some sort of dialogue on developing a contemporary consensus on a philosophy of Christian education for the schools of the LCMS. This document is designed to be a beginning—and only a beginning—of a call by *Lutheran Education* for submissions on such a philosophy of education. Ideally, these submissions could culminate in some type of symposium on

developing a consensus
on such a philosophy.

The symposium could be
sponsored by the Synod,
by the Lutheran
Education Association,
by *Lutheran Education*,
by Concordia Seward’s
Issues in Lutheran

To date, it appears that there is
no contemporary consensus on a
document that articulates the
Missouri Synod’s philosophy of
Christian education.

Education, by one of the universities in the Concordia University System, or some other concerned organization.

Primary Philosophical Schools

This article begins with a brief discussion of the three primary western philosophical schools of thought, in order of development: Idealism, Realism, and Pragmatism. This and the next section are based on descriptions in Knight (1989). A more comprehensive treatment of these topics is found in William Rietschel’s recent text, *An Introduction to the Foundations of Lutheran Education* (2000).

The “Idealist” states that “ideas” are real, that they are discovered through the use of logical reasoning, and, in the process, the nature of “the Good” will be discovered. The “Realist” states that “things” are real, that the truth about things is discovered through the use of empirical methodologies, and that there is a “natural law” that governs human interactions in the same manner that physical reality is governed by “the laws of nature.” The “Pragmatist” says that “experience” is real, that the consequences of experience are the only arbiters of the truthfulness of experiences, and that “the greatest good for the greatest number” determines values

and proper conduct.

(Catholic) Christian education prior to the Enlightenment found that the philosophy of Idealism was quite sufficient to determine its basic posture, primary emphases, curricular emphases, and methodological and evaluation strategies. As the Enlightenment began to resurrect the philosophy of Realism, Thomas Aquinas and others developed the philosophy of “Neo-Scholasticism” to bring harmony to the challenge that Realism posed to the tenets of the Christian faith. Their position was that faith and reason are equally gifts of God to mankind to understand human reality; where the two gifts are found to contradict each other, faith must be given precedence over reason.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Pragmatism became a synthesizing rationale for public education, especially among “Progressive” educators in the United States. However, the actual practice of public education in the U.S. has continued to be based on the “Essentialist” point-of-view, instead. Essentialism is the position that American K-12 education should teach the traditional “tried-and-true” components of the *essential* learnings that facilitate mature functioning in society as an adult.

While each philosophical position is applicable to guide Christian education, each also has a set of liabilities, but to varying degrees, in providing a satisfactory philosophical base for the practice of Christian education. Therefore, this treatise will attempt to develop a philosophy of Christian education applicable to Christianity’s unique understandings and goals.

What is “Philosophy”?

The three fundamental categories that a “philosophy” comprises are metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology. “Metaphysics” is the study of questions concerning the nature of reality. “Epistemology” is the study of the nature of truth and knowledge and how they are attained. “Axiology” is the study of questions of value and proper conduct.

Metaphysics, literally defined, means “beyond physics,” or beyond physical manifestations; it is the study of what is ultimate reality. Metaphysics comprises four other philosophical categories: “cosmology” is the study of theories about the origin, nature, and development of the universe as an orderly system; “theology” develops conceptualizations of and about God; “anthropology” is the study of the essence of mankind; and “ontology” is the study of the nature of existence. Ontology attempts to answer the question: “What is reality?”

Epistemology studies the nature, sources, and validity of knowledge. Once

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ontology has defined what is real, epistemology seeks to determine how one knows something within that reality. It seeks the answer to the question: "How does one know one knows something?" or "What is the source and certainty of knowledge?"

Axiology seeks to answer the question "What is of value?" or "What is proper conduct?" Specifically, "ethics" studies moral values and conduct while "aesthetics" searches for the principles governing the creation and appreciation of beauty and art.

A Philosophy of Christian Education

In order to begin the development of a philosophy of Christian education, we will attempt to develop the ontology, the epistemology, and the axiology of a philosophy of Christian education. In other words, we will try to answer the questions: To a Christian, what is reality? How does a Christian know he or she knows something? And, ultimately, what is the Christian basis for values and proper conduct? The aim of the first part of this discourse is to develop a *philosophy* as defined above, *not* a "rationale" which merely states why we do or do not do something in education. The following discussion is based on Luther's *Small Catechism* (1943, questions 1-12 and 91-99).

A. What is reality to the Christian? (Ontology)

Christian reality is based on three premises. First, the universe, including humankind, was created by God the Father, the first person of the Trinity. Second, humankind is separated from God by the state of sin. This separation, if not remedied, will result in everlasting damnation for the separated soul. Third, the essence of Christian reality, as well as the remedy for the sin-sick soul, is found in belief that accepting Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, as one's personal Savior is the only way to salvation. These premises are found in their essence in the statements of the Apostles' Creed.

1. Sin separates human kind from God; belief in Christ returns believers to God.

"Sin is the transgression of the Law" (1 John 3:4). Sin was brought into the universe by Satan, the devil, who was once a holy angel, but fell away from God (1 John 3:8; Rev. 12:9), and by Eve and Adam, who of their own free will yielded to the temptation of the devil in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-7). Original or inherited sin is the total corruption of our whole human nature passed on from the original disobedience to God of Adam and Eve, humankind's father and mother, to every other human being (1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:18-19). This state of sin causes each one of us to be

born into the world separated from God (Ps. 51:5) and prone to live without true fear, love, and trust in God, without righteousness, and inclined only to that which is evil. Original sin, then, causes us to commit all manner of actual sins, acts against God in our thoughts, words, and deeds. The consequence of this separation from God for each human being is everlasting damnation in hell (Matt. 25:30, 41, 46).

We can find salvation only in the Gospel, which tells us that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, born of a human mother, fulfilled the Law of his Father by leading a perfect life on earth, suffered and died innocently for our sins on the cross, and then rose from the dead for us as our substitute. The explanation of how the process of redemption has been worked out by the Triune God is found in the oldest ecumenical creed, the Apostles' Creed.

2. The Apostles' Creed defines Christian reality.

The first person of the Trinity is God the Father, almighty creator of the universe. God the Father created everything, and everything God the Father created was good and perfect until ruined by Satan, Eve, and Adam.

The second person of the Trinity is God the Son, Jesus Christ, redeemer of the sins of the universe. He is true God, son of the Father from eternity, conceived by the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, and born as a human being to the Virgin Mary. He led a perfect life, fulfilling the Will of God the Father, suffered in his life on earth as a human being, especially under Pontius Pilate, was unjustly condemned, crucified, and died on the cross for all sins—past, present, and future—and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Aramethia. He descended into hell to show his victory over Satan and rose from the dead after three days. He ascended into heaven 40 days later where he sits on the right hand of God the Father, the Judge of the universe, pleading the case of his chosen believers to enter heaven and condemning to everlasting punishment those who do not accept him as their substitute in terms of the Will of God the Father.

The third person of the Trinity is God the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to believe and then to live as God wants us to live. Because we cannot by our own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit calls us through the Gospel, enlightens us with his gifts, and sanctifies and keeps us in the one true faith. The Holy Spirit provides the power to believe this, the only view of Christian reality to the whole Christian Church on earth.

Thus, although mankind is condemned to everlasting damnation in hell by our separation from God by our sins, the redemptive act whereby God the Son took on the characteristics of humanity, fulfilled the Law of his Father, suffered, died on the cross

for all the sins of the universe, and rose from dead allows those who are empowered by the Holy Spirit to believe these truths to regain a proper relationship with God and receive everlasting life in heaven as a result after they die.

The foregoing is reality, “ultimate reality,” or “truth” to the Christian. The ultimate source of the “truth” is God’s Word as expressed in the Holy Scriptures.

B. What is the source and certainty of Christian knowledge of this truth? (Epistemology)

For conservatively oriented Christians, the answer to this question comes very easily. The Bible, Holy Scripture, is the source and norm of Christian faith and practice. The Bible was written by the inspiration of God (II Tim. 3:16). The Holy Spirit moved the holy writers to write and put the very thoughts and words that they wrote into their minds (II Pet. 1:21; I Cor. 2:13). Since every word is God’s Word, the Bible is without error (John 17:17; John 10:35). In addition, Holy Scripture interprets itself. According to the Apostle Paul: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man [person] of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. 3:15-17).

C. According to Christian truth or certainty, what are, therefore, Christian values and proper conduct? (Axiology)¹

Lutheran theology, as interpreted by C. F. W. Walther, the primary founder of the LCMS, has a ready answer to this question: the proper relationship between Law and Gospel is the key to values and proper conduct for the Christian. The Law tells us what we are to do; the Gospel reveals to us only what God is doing. All the promises of the Law are made on the condition that we obey the Law perfectly. The Gospel promises us the grace of God and salvation without any conditions whatsoever. It is a promise of free grace.

The Law is God the Father’s Will that we are to live a perfect life of obedience to his expectations. The Law, essentially but not exclusively the Ten Commandments, tells us how we are to be and what we are to do and not to do.

The Gospel is the “Good News” of our salvation in Jesus Christ. It is the Good News that Christ was the God-made-man who, as our substitute, lived the perfect life that God the Father ordained. He then took on all the sins of the universe—past,

¹ This section is based on Pieper (1973).

present, and future—when he suffered and died on the cross. His resurrection three days later demonstrated his victory over sin, death, and the devil. Christ now acts as our advocate before the throne of God the Father in heaven, using his redemptive work as our defense against the charges leveled against us by the Law.

The Law is nothing but threats. It tells us what to do, but it does not enable us to comply with its commands. It reveals our sins, but it offers us no help to overcome them. It hurls us into despair. The Law produces contrition; it conjures up the terrors of the wrath of God, death, and hell. But it offers us no comfort whatsoever!

The Gospel, on the other hand, contains no threats at all, but only words of consolation. God the Holy Spirit gives people the power to believe when the Gospel is presented to them. The Gospel comforts us and removes the terror, fear, and anguish engendered by the Law. It fills us with peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The Gospel demands nothing of the Christian but the belief empowered by the Holy Spirit. Humans can do nothing to merit the call of the Gospel. But once implanted in us, the Gospel empowers us to love and makes us capable of good works.

The Law is to be preached and taught to secure sinners; the Gospel is to be preached and taught to alarmed sinners. As long as a person is at ease in his or her sins, only the Law, which curses and condemns, is to be preached or taught to him or her. However, the moment he or she becomes frightened of his or her condition, the Gospel is to be promptly administered. And, to poor, sad-hearted sinners not a word of Law must be presented.

I Timothy 1:8-10 and Isaiah 61:1-3 show us that, according to God's Word, not a drop of evangelical consolation is to be brought to those who are still living securely in their sins. On the other hand, to the brokenhearted, not a syllable containing a threat or a rebuke is to be addressed, but only promises conveying consolation and grace, forgiveness of sins and righteousness, and salvation.

The Law is revealed to us to teach us that we are utterly unable to fulfill it. Once this is learned, we will see the Gospel as the sweet message of our free gift of grace. However, the Law remains in force; it is not abrogated. Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin: "to one who . . . trusts in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5).

Christ did not come into the world to publish new laws for us. He gave us a "new covenant." Christians after the resurrection have been made free to live in terms of the Gospel. Christ came to fulfill the Law for us so that we might share his fulfillment.

God does not tell us to preach the Law in order to make humans godly (Rom. 3:20). A person becomes righteous in the sight of God solely by faith through the Gospel (Gal. 3:11-12). The book of Romans contains this doctrine in its entirety. In

the first three chapters we find the sharpest preaching of the Law. This is followed, toward the end of the third chapter and in chapters four and five, by the doctrine of justification—nothing but that. Beginning with chapter 6, the Apostle treats of nothing else than sanctification. Here we have a true pattern of the correct sequence: first the Law, threatening sinners with the wrath of God; next the Gospel, announcing the comforting promises of God. This is followed by instruction regarding the things we are to do after we have become new people.

Law and Gospel are not rightly divided when sinners who have been struck down and terrified by the Law are directed, not to the Word and Sacraments, but to their own prayers and wrestlings with God in order that they may win their way into a state of grace; in other words, when they are told to keep on praying and struggling until they feel that God has received them into grace.

The attempt to make people godly by means of the Law and to induce even those who are already believers in Christ to do that which is good by holding up the Law and issuing commands to them, also is a very gross confounding of Law and Gospel. The only reason people must understand the Law in their hearts is that they might know what is pleasing to God. As soon as the Law has done its work, the Gospel must take its place.

Law and Gospel are confounded and perverted for the hearers of the Word, not only when the Law predominates in preaching and teaching, but also when Law and Gospel, as a rule, are equally balanced and the Gospel is not predominant in the preaching and teaching. The ultimate aim in our preaching and teaching of the Law must be to preach and teach the Gospel. Thus Law is important, but the Gospel must predominate because it alone is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16).²

D. Summary

This “Christian” philosophy, therefore, states that humankind is inherently sinful and removed by sin from an acceptable relationship with God. God is a Trinity, and a proper relationship to God is gained through the work of God the Holy Spirit who empowers us to believe that God the Son became a man and, as our substitute, fulfilled the Law ordained by God the Father and took on all the sins of the universe - past, present, and future—when he died on the cross and rose again three days later. Holy Scripture, inspired by God and, therefore, inerrant, reveals to us the truthfulness

² For a practical application of Law and Gospel in Christian education, see Moser (1986).

of these beliefs. Values and proper conduct are reinforced by the proper application of Law and Gospel. For the believer, the Gospel is the key to Christian love and, therefore, the predominant guideline for the development of Christian values and conduct.

The Gospel thus frees Christians from the negative consequences of the Law to be truly righteous. Christians are free to fulfill the Law by loving God above all things and loving their neighbors as they love themselves. Christians, therefore, are free to be loving, other-oriented people concerned about the spiritual and earthly welfare of humankind (John 3:16). They use the Gospel as the supreme motivation for their thoughts, words, and deeds.

Christian Educational Theory

A. Basic introduction

For purposes of this article, we return to Knight (1989) where the basic components of educational theory associated with a philosophical approach are defined as a *basic posture*, the essential mind-set, in congruence with the primary ontological emphases of the philosophy; a *primary emphasis*, the basic academic content that the philosophy emphasizes; *curricular emphases*, the subject-matter most appropriate to put the philosophy into practice; *methodological strategies*, the instructional strategies most appropriate to the philosophical endeavor; and *evaluation strategies*, the type of experiences that best reinforce and identify successful mastery of the content, values, and skills associated with the philosophy.

The basic posture of Idealist educational theory is to exercise the mind in contemplation of absolute truth. It emphasizes approaches that are high on the taxonomies of cognitive educational objectives: concepts, interpretation, and evaluation. Literature and history and geometry are the basic curricular emphases. The primary teaching strategy is discussion, and the basic evaluation approach involves subjective testing, especially the essay examination.

The basic posture of Realist educational theory is to teach the objective truths that have been obtained via empirical observation and experimentation. Realists emphasize the learning of the objective facts of most empirical merit organized into systematic categories that lead to laws and theories that attempt to unite knowledge of the universe into a systematic whole. Students conduct “experiments” in order to experience how the empirical method operates. The physical sciences and mathematics, the language of the sciences, are the basic curricular emphases. Realist instructional strategies emphasize thorough knowledge of subject matter, probably dispersed via authoritative lectures combined with student practice of methodology in

laboratory “experiments.” Objective evaluation strategies would predominate using multiple-choice, matching, true-false, and fill-in-the-blank questions.

To the Pragmatist, specific subject matter is unimportant in itself. Solutions to practical problems are most important. To the Pragmatist, real learning begins with the interests and concerns of the learners. The primary emphasis is on the study of situations relevant to the learners and the solutions to the problems those situations engender for the learners. The setting for these student endeavors is a context of consensual and/or democratic decision-making. The social sciences provide the basic curricular context of Pragmatist education and also serve as the instrumentalities for verifying the validity of the subject-matter emphases. The methodological strategies associated with a Pragmatist learning theory place students in a position where they must confront a problem relevant to their life situations, analyze it, propose potential solutions, test the

possible solutions, and arrive at a set of potential solutions to the problem, essentially within a context of group cooperation. The effectiveness of the

The primary emphasis of a Lutheran educational theory is the proper understanding of Law and Gospel.

learning is tested by the ability of the students to effectively and efficiently apply past learnings in new problematic situations.

B. Basic posture of a Christian educational philosophy

The basic posture or mind-set of a theory of Christian education is that sin separates each human being from a satisfactory relationship with God. Use of the Law is necessary to demoralize the unrepentant sinner as to the gravity of his or her separation from God. However, once the sinner has indicated by word or action that he or she is contrite and sorrowful over his or her sins, then the Gospel is to be administered. The Gospel message is the vehicle by which the Holy Spirit is enabled to work within each person, motivating the person to believe that Jesus Christ has taken upon himself the punishment for his or her sins and has restored his or her relationship with God. Upon believing that Jesus is his or her personal Savior, the penitent will want to learn more about God’s Will and will also want to live a life that is congruent with those learnings (Rom. 8:5).

C. Primary emphasis

The primary emphasis of a Lutheran educational theory is the proper understanding of Law and Gospel. The impenitent sinner requires the Law in order to show him or her the gravity of his or her separation from God (the second use of the Law). But the penitent sinner needs the Gospel to reassure him or her of his or her renewed covenant relationship with God.

Then, the Holy Spirit empowers each of us penitent sinners to live the type of life that is congruent with our renewed covenant relationship with God. Where the third use of the Law teaches us Christians those works we must do to lead a God-pleasing life, the Gospel motivates an even higher level of sanctified living. The agape love of the Gospel results in a lifestyle that, in putting love of God above all other things, motivates us to love others as God, in Christ, loved us, as well as to attempt to emulate the sacrificial love for others exemplified by Christ himself. The highest of moral convictions and resultant conduct are outcomes of a life empowered by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel.

D. Curricular emphases

1. The religion curriculum

The array of “religion” courses that have been taught through the ages has involved the study of the Old Testament, the New Testament, church history, and doctrine or theology classes.

The study of the Old Testament shows us how God the father worked to create the universe, how Satan, Eve, and Adam destroyed the perfection of that creation, how God the Father promised eventually to send a Savior to the world, and how he chose a special people, the Jews, to be his covenant people of the promise. The history of the Old Testament is traced from the patriarchs, to the prophets, through one and then two kingdoms of Israel, and through several captivities. Law and promise are the emphases of the Old Testament.

The New Testament recounts how the promise of the Savior was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, how Christ was the god-man who fulfilled the Law perfectly, lived, suffered, died, and rose again taking on the sins of the universe—past, present, and future—as our substitute in order to restore each one of us to an acceptable relationship with God. After the ascension, the beginnings of the early Christian church are recounted in the New Testament. The proper application of Law and Gospel were first practiced by Christ and then articulated by the epistle writers. The New Testament adds Gentiles, all other people of the universe, us, to the covenant promise.

The study of church history shows us how the church militant on earth developed after the close of the New Testament and shows especially how the story

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of God's promise to Adam and Eve and its fulfillment in Christ can be traced through the ages until it brings each one of us into his fold. I am the end result of salvation history! God did all of this for *me*, so that I, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, would become a believer in Christ and inherit salvation!

The study of doctrine, or theology, is presented to each Christian at her level of need, from child to adolescent to adult to professional church worker. Only the Bible, however, serves as the source and norm of Christian doctrine.

2. The "secular" curriculum

The so-called "secular" subjects are taught in the Christian school "in, with, and under" the religious curricular emphases. Reading and writing provide each student with the methods of receiving and sending communications. Mathematics and science enable empirical understanding of the wonders of God's miraculous creation and how to use the natural environment to truly "inherit" the earth. The social sciences provide a curricular setting for facilitating the application of one's personal philosophy of life "in," but hopefully not naively "of," the world. The arts enable us to better understand and express our feelings for God, each other, and God's creation. Health and physical education assist us to take proper care of the "temple" God has given us.

3. The "co-curriculum"

In addition, the co-curriculum or extra-curriculum of the Christian school, when appropriately supervised, enables young folks to put their religious beliefs and values and secular understandings and skills into use in the concurrent settings of athletics, musical ensembles, clubs, and various social activities.

4. Some cautions and suggestions

The evolutionary teachings of science tend to contradict God's miraculous, all-powerful activity in the universe. The social sciences, especially history, do not offer us much insight into the omniscience or will of God. Only the Gospel leads us to salvation. However, as individuals, each one of us is free to interpret the intercessions of God in our own lives. As with the social sciences, any age-appropriate work of literature, drama, or art can be interpreted for insights into human interactions and their faith-life implications. Health education can emphasize the wonders of God's creation of our human bodies. Physical education and sports can encourage the application of appropriate Christian values, attitudes, and behaviors in our interactions. The co-curriculum can be used to teach various skills in a Christian

setting.

In all these endeavors, opportunities abound for prayer, praise, and worship. In these endeavors it is the professionally educated church worker who is best qualified to integrate the Christian faith appropriately into the “secular” subjects. Although care must be exercised, Christian principles, as appropriate, permeate the secular and co-curricular aspects of education in the Lutheran school and are integrated into each pupil’s knowledge, values, behaviors, and skills. The entire operation of the Christian school, as well, is also permeated by Christian principles.

E. Methodological strategies

Whereas each age-level and subject matter has its own appropriate pedagogical strategies, the strategies by which the power of Law and Gospel are passed from each Christian to all others is

forgiveness. We forgive because we are forgiven. We forgive the wrongs we suffer as a result of the behavior of others. We plead for forgiveness when we offend others by our actions or our inaction. We preach and teach the forgiveness of sins as the Gospel remedy for our violations of the Law. God, because of

Christ, has forgiven us for these violations. We, in turn, forgive others for the same reason—Christ died for us all!

Although care must be exercised, Christian principles, as appropriate, permeate the secular and co-curricular aspects of education in the Lutheran school and are integrated into each pupil’s knowledge, values, behaviors, and skills.

F. Evaluation strategies

Again, whereas each age-level and subject matter has its own appropriate evaluation strategies, as Christians we are tested by conditions of day-to-day living. We succeed by the power of the Holy Spirit. When we fail, we forgive ourselves. We try again. We recognize that we are simultaneously sinful saints and sainted sinners. During good or evil conduct, we continue to be God’s loved children. And we love others in an attempt to be examples of the love of God in Christ for each one of us.

An Afterword

The foregoing educational theory might be considered for parish education: the sanctification emphases of the Sunday School, adolescent parish education, and adult Bible class study, and the evangelistic emphasis of the Vacation Bible School. But it might also be the emphasis of the parochial preschool, elementary school, secondary school, and higher education. The specific commitments would remain the same in the parochial school. However, the presence of a “secular” curriculum and, in our contemporary world, the presence of those “not of the household of faith” present an added dimension to parochial education as compared to that of parish education.†

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What's Lutheran About Lutheran Teaching?

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What do you mean, you're a *Lutheran* teacher? Or professor? Or DCE? Christendom covers time and space beyond the dotted lines of the Lutheran tradition, and few of us wish to say that Lutherans have a monopoly on the Christian faith. Yet we maintain that the Lutheran heritage is more than merely a family inheritance or the inertia of our institutions. We remind ourselves that something distinctive characterizes our spiritual tradition, something that yields a great blessing both for Lutherans and for others, Christian and non-Christian, who become acquainted with it.

We can frame this distinctiveness as "distinct from" or as "distinct for." One way to understand (or promote) a tradition is to contrast it with other traditions—such as, in this case, Calvinist Reformed, Roman Catholic, or Wesleyan—and show why this tradition is different. Another way is to highlight how a tradition shares some common features with other traditions and has aspects and additional features that may inform or enhance other traditions.

What exactly is this distinction that makes our

efforts as teachers of the church both different and helpful enough to justify our persistence? What do we have to offer that makes the effort worthwhile for all the church catholic? This article argues that Lutheranism has much to offer all inquirers, including those who have no coherent tradition at all, but that Lutheran educators must be well versed in their own tradition to make that offering in an engaging and winsome way.

Ten features of Lutheranism give it the contours and landscape of a province in Christendom well worth living in or visiting, a province that contributes much to the Christian commonwealth.¹ The centerpiece of this article is a summary of ten key insights about the Gospel that emerged from the Wittenberg Reformation and that constitute our Lutheran heritage. By surveying all of them at once, we can gain a sharpened appreciation of what makes our teaching distinctive and worthwhile and what we have to contribute to the spiritual lives of all who may study with us.

Reasons to Read On

Before conducting that survey, however, we have reasons why this review is important. Given our common fallen predicament, some of these reasons have to do with our falling short of who God calls us to be. This fallen condition, of course, is in part why teaching is necessary (cf. Jer. 31:34). But by and large a survey of our Lutheran distinctions is very positive and inclusive in the large and eternal sense of that word. Here are four reasons for reviewing a list of our Lutheran distinctions.

First, much like the church's first century when Paul sought out Gentiles in each city's marketplace, our world today is a bazaar of spiritualities. Perhaps the most telling example of spiritual diversity and fragmentation is the Oprah Winfrey Show, but spiritual alternatives are now everywhere. People are spiritual beings and now, as always, they are seeking some orientation to the eternal (cf. Eccl. 3:11). But amid the diversity, people find very few orientations that have a coherent tradition² of

¹This territory image deserves critique. The role of Lutheranism has been an important debate since the diet of Augsburg and the Augsburg Confession in 1530. Should we understand Lutheranism as a movement, a denomination, an ecumenical servant of orthodoxy to all church bodies, or in yet some other way?

²In its richest connotation, tradition is not a wooden, static set of behaviors enacted out of mindless habit, but rather a set of beliefs, arguments, convictions, and practices thoughtfully worked out as a meaningful worldview by a community over time. When Tevya in "Fiddler on the Roof" sings about "Tradition!" he sings about

convictions hammered out through years of careful study of the Scriptures, and fewer still that locate their spiritual well being in God's promises rather than in their self-justifying spiritual projects and personal efforts.

Lutheranism gives us such a tradition. It gives all of us a defined base line from which to start and then explore a spiritual orientation. It gives Christians and non-Christians a worked-out set of convictions about life, God, and the world he loves. It is no small service to provide all interested parties with such a tradition against which they can estimate their

own and other (and often less coherent) views.

What's more, our presentation of our tradition will perforce include the Gospel itself and its power to create faith in Christ and transform lives.

Second, Christianity always has its elements of folk religion. "Plaque Christianity" hangs in homes and classrooms everywhere: "When God closes a door, he opens a window," and "Who I am

is God's gift to me; who I become is my gift to God." The point here is not to rant about pious and frequently misleading religious platitudes. These will always be with us. The point is that a fresh, informed, and congenial integration of the Reformation's insights about the Gospel in our teaching can prompt our students beyond any folk religion they may embrace.

Third, and related to folk Christianity, those distinctive Reformation insights of the Gospel help prevent the Christian's slide into excessive pietism and subjectivity.

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the denotation of tradition in certain customs in his community rather than the tradition itself. Alasdair MacIntyre (1981, p. 207) has written extensively on tradition as a community's narrative history and identity.

We Christians, and Lutherans in particular, always deal with the tension between the objective truth of God's revelation of himself in history through Jesus Christ, and our own personal, subjective (and important) experience of that truth. This tension was the source of many of the ancient heresies that continue with us in various forms today. A tradition of worked-out and examined convictions about the Gospel help people both new and seasoned in the faith to avoid construing God's work among us as merely God's work in me.³

Fourth, the Lutheran tradition—this set of insights about the Gospel that has given Lutherans their distinctive heritage—serves as a blessing to the whole church by helping to distinguish the Gospel as good news. The devil, the world, and the sinful self are all engaged in spirituality campaigns, but they all conduct them by enlisting us as the captains of our own campaigns. Their hymn is not “Lift High the Cross” but lift high yourself. And institutions of education are notorious for teaching their unsuspecting students the many human merit systems, be they academic, social, or athletic. The Lutheran Reformation developed these insights and applications of the Gospel to our human institutions to make our sharing of the Gospel lively and formative and keep it as God's intervention rather than our spiritual invention.

The Three Solas

The three Reformation *solas* are a good introduction to the Lutheran insights and serve as sure referents for exploring and examining them.⁴ Each of the insights described later in the article is an extension of these *solas*, just as our ministry of Lutheran education is an extension of the insights. Together these insights provide a helpful way to understand the integrity of our tradition in the Gospel that we share with fellow sinners. That's the purpose of this article: to recall what distinguishes this Lutheran heritage as a Christian tradition that genuinely serves the church and the

³A related problem is reducing faith to rigid, dry dogmatism. A living faith tradition as we are discussing it here offsets such wooden orthodoxy by sustaining dialog across and within the generations of believers, and with inquirers. This Spirited exchange keeps faith active in love.

⁴Nafzger's (1994) brief treatment of the *Solas* is helpful here. That section is posted on line at <http://www.lcms.org/nafzger2.HTM>, “What Do Lutherans Believe?” This *Introduction* is also a reminder that these *solas* and the Gospel insights of the Lutheran Reformation are worked out thoroughly in the Lutheran Confessions as found in the Book of Concord.

world that God so loves.

Sola Gratia (Latin for “grace alone”) is the heart of the Reformation. Luther’s breakthrough to the Gospel—that is, when the Holy Spirit broke through to him with the Gospel—came through Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’” Luther realized that the required righteousness Paul describes in Romans is not God’s righteousness of judging and punishing sinners, nor our active but impossible righteousness of obeying the Law. It is God’s active righteousness accomplished in us and on our behalf not through the Law but by a different Word of God that became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Hence, God’s active righteousness in Christ becomes our passive righteousness as a gift (*gratia*):

I realized it was to be understood in this way: the righteousness of God is revealed through the Gospel, namely the so-called “passive” righteousness we receive, through which God justifies us by faith through grace and mercy.... Now I felt as if I had been born again. The gates of heaven had opened and I had entered paradise itself. (Oberman, 1992, p. 165)

Among the many implications of grace alone is the assurance that God’s “Yes” (II Cor. 1:18ff) is to all people of all times and all places. While “Lutheranism” may to some sound parochial in the worst sense (and has at times been practiced that way), the Lutheran tradition gives us both a compassion and a set of convictions for sharing, teaching, and dialog that reaches out with God’s love to everyone.

One helpful way the Reformers kept faith as a *sola* rather than a duet of God and man was by emphasizing faith as trust. The phrase they used was *fiducia cordis*, “trust in the heart.” Since it is the nature of promise to create trust, and God alone can make the promises of the Gospel (*sola gratia*), then faith also is God’s work alone—and this secures our faith which alone can embrace God’s promises. Early on, Luther had thought that faith was a virtue or trait imputed by the Holy Spirit which we then put to work to lay hold of grace, much as we use the virtue of honesty to work rightly with truth. But as his reading of Scripture clarified the Gospel, he understood faith as the Holy Spirit’s changing the heart by means of God’s Word and creating our very thirst and desire for God’s grace.

The second *sola*, then, is *sola fide* - faith alone. While God’s gifts of forgiveness, deliverance from death and the devil, and life everlasting are for everyone, this grace, conveyed to us through Word and sacraments, comes only through faith in Christ. This “faith alone,” without our effort, contribution,

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cooperation, reason, or strength, keeps the Gospel as truly good news. It reminds us that our right relationship with God does not rely on anything we do—which as sinners we might do wrongly—but on what God alone does for us. In terms of *sola fide*, what God the Holy Spirit does is create our faith in Christ.

Teaching in the Lutheran tradition, then, is quite distinct from (though not necessarily hostile to) teaching as moral development or character education, which would seek to inculcate the proper virtues of intellect, conscience, and emotion. Valuable as these virtues may be, they are not the basis for education—though they may be related in some ways to the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) which is the outcome of our training in a righteousness that comes by grace alone.

The third *sola*, Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*), forms a triad with the first two *solas*. Samuel Nafzger (1994) writes, “Luther’s insight that salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone cannot be divorced from ‘on the basis of Scripture alone.’ For it was directly as a result of his commitment to Scripture that Luther came to rediscover justification by grace alone through faith alone” (p. 5). This rediscovery came as Luther pursued his vocation of teaching.

Teaching, by its nature, is concerned with content as well as personhood and always has a *telos* or ultimate aim in mind (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 1986, p. 8). In the Lutheran tradition, Scripture alone serves as our source and norm for assessing the spiritual nature and direction of our teaching ministry. How directly we relate this source and norm, and our ultimate aim, to curriculum is one of our on-going discussions, and in our tradition it should be. It has been since Wittenberg. However we may address this issue locally and specifically today, the three Reformation *solas* suggest at least ten implications that relate the Gospel to the Christian life and inform our discussions. Together these create a living tradition that shapes the scope and purpose of our educational ministry in powerful ways at all levels.

Ten Lutheran Distinctions

What follows next is a digest of these ten insights. Other students of the Lutheran tradition may list them and summarize them differently.⁵ The point here is to present them, however briefly, so that we can continue to ask and seek to answer,

⁵Many readers will note the conspicuous absence of several important themes such as the priesthood of all believers, *ecclesia semper reformanda* (the church is always reforming), and others. Please note such omissions as you talk with others about what is Lutheran about Lutheran teaching.

“What’s Lutheran about Lutheran teaching, anyway?”

1. The spiritual is in relation to the material.

Different from the misleading notion that the spiritual and the material are isolated from each other and even hostile to each other, Lutherans recognize God’s divine work and blessing in “things visible and invisible” (Nicene Creed). God’s work, while mysterious, is nevertheless plain to us in the physical world not only in creation but also through Jesus’ incarnation and resurrection, and in the sacraments. When Paul writes in Colossians 1:16, “For in him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible . . . all things were created through him and for him; he is before all things and in him all

things hold together,” he is not endorsing pantheism but is saying all things have their being and reason in God. If a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, then all of life is a parable with a spiritual meaning implicit in it. As Lutheran educators, we are

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surrounded by spiritually loaded incidents and events every day. We can help students learn to see the spiritual intersecting with the secular by addressing selected events. We can be especially helpful by teaching others to distinguish folk religion and reverent superstitions (*deisidaimonia*)⁶ from ways of divine intervention confirmed by Scripture. (See Kolb, 1993, p. 16.)

2. The Freedom and Bondage of the Will

Christians often speak imprecisely about “free will” as if we all have a will freed

⁶The Greek word *deisidaimonia*, as found for example in Acts 17:22 and 25:19, can be translated as religion or as superstition. It literally means “fear of the demon-gods” and was used to indicate recognition of God or the gods mingled more with fear than with trust; superstition though not in a wicked sense; and attributing to God that which is not truly characteristic of God or authentic about his actions.

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from sin and its damage. Lutherans are careful to recognize that the human will apart from the restoring work of the Holy Spirit is tainted by sin and that “The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 7:8). A freeing of the will comes only through a trusting relationship with God, empowered by the Holy Spirit. This freeing comes with faith and is completed at our resurrection. Apart from this freedom, we have only a limited will. We can choose a brand of clothing or a marriage partner or to make a charitable donation, but we cannot choose for the goodness and righteousness of God in our lives and actions. Our students of all ages often confuse this real freedom with claims about free choice in a world that is diverse in every way. Our choice of expressions and instruction about the freedom and bondage of the will can help them sort out this confusion. (See Dillenberger, 1962, p. 166.)

3. Two Chief Words: Law and Gospel

Law and Gospel, of course, apply to everything about the Christian life and about sharing our Christian faith and life with others. (See Walther, 1986.) One important application of the distinction between Law and Gospel is the difference between legalism and antinomianism. Legalism is the belief and use of God’s Law as though laws, rules, regulations, and consequences can solve sin, motivate good behavior, and create Christian community. This amounts to an idolatry of the Law. Antinomianism (Latin for “against rules”) is the belief that because God has forgiven us and freed us from the curse of the Law’s punishment, we no longer need the Law. This amounts to cheap grace. Christians, whatever their age, often seek refuge in these two errors. We can help them avoid these errors by how we express and apply our rules and consequences in the classroom, how we instruct for life together in Christian community, and where we direct them for genuine refuge from all the ways in which the Law and its demand for righteousness threaten us: “I have another righteousness and life above this life which is Christ the Son of God who knows no sin or death but is my righteousness and life eternal, by whom I shall be raised up and delivered from the bondage of the Law and sin” (Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, in Dillenberger, 1962, p. 106).

4. *Simul iustus et Peccator*

This Latin translates as “at the same time justified and sinful” and captures one of the great Biblical paradoxes that characterize the entire Christian life. The catechism applies it in the ideas of “old Adam” and “new you.” As Christians we continue to live with our sinful nature and experience its influence until we die. But we

simultaneously live as new creations of God despite this continued sinful condition. So Paul confesses, “I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do” (Rom. 7:19), yet declares, “Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold the new has come” (II Cor. 5:17). Paul denatures the paradox only in Christ (see Rom. 6) and resolves that, despite our sin, “You must consider yourself dead to sin and alive in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11). Our students, young and old, often think in only one category or the other. We can help them recognize the *simul* paradox by responding to their inquiries about our life together with that practical theological question: “Why do you want to know?” In other words, who wants to know about this issue—the old Adam or the new you? We need to articulate and practice community so that the certainty of the Gospel enables sinners to live together in an uncertain world as the saints of God. (See Dillenberger, 1962, p. 99.)

5. Two Kinds of Righteousness

All Christians possess two kinds of righteousness, one that is not their own and one that is. All Christians need help with distinguishing while sustaining both of them. (See Dillenberger, 1962, p. 159.) Lutherans recognize a righteousness that makes our life and relationship with God right, good, and fulfilled. This rightness comes to us as a gift from God and not through any efforts or ideas of our own. Luther called it an alien righteousness coming down from God through Christ in a vertical relationship. We also recognize another righteousness that makes our relationship with other people right, good, and worth living. In this horizontal relationship with others, our rightness consists in loving our neighbors as ourselves through our works and actions. This second righteousness is a kind of “donated” righteousness, as we use the gift of alien righteousness and extend it to others in our words and deeds. The Lutheran tradition educates people to clearly acknowledge, distinguish, and foster both kinds of righteousness—the first through God’s Word and promises, the second as fruits of faith in Christ through stirring one another up to love and good works (Hebr. 10:23-25).

6. The Hidden God and the Revealed God

Through the centuries, many observers have noticed that people are incurably religious, having endless ideas about God and what he is like. All cultures and societies have devised forms for both worshipping and denying God or gods they vaguely sense exist or at least wonder about. Lutherans also have noticed that people constantly speculate about “the hidden God.” Typically this speculation, based on guesses and inferences from nature, imagines a God who is majestic,

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glorious, and threatening, i.e., the “hidden God of the Law only,” says Luther (see Dillenberger, 1953, p. 101). The God revealed to us through Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection discloses a different picture. In Jesus, we see God in weakness, humility, and mercy. While it is true that in Jesus we catch an occasional glimpse of kingdom, power, and glory, we mainly see “crib, cross, and crypt” in the Gospel accounts (see Kolb, 1993, p. 20). This is “the revealed God” in the God-man, Jesus Christ. Our teaching and practice within a living community of humility, service, and compassion are part of God’s project to reveal himself to us in Jesus through external and accessible Word and sacrament, not through our speculation and guess work about what remains hidden (Dt. 29: 29, Hebr. 2: 8-9).

7. Theology of the Cross and Theology of Glory

Rather than seeing God hidden in suffering and crucifixion, many Christians seek God in the majesty of his creation (Rom. 1:20), in the power of nature (Ps. 8:3), or the glory and terror of his Second Coming and judgment (Rev. 6:15). While these are certainly Biblical themes, none of them as such can help the sinner damned under the

Our students, like our culture in general, are often looking for God in all the wrong places. We need a coarse, splintered, bloodstained cross in every quad and courtyard to which each of our lessons and policies can be nailed.

Law and wrath of this mighty, majestic, and glorious God. Therefore, Luther followed Paul in regarding these themes as secondary to all God was doing through the humiliation and death of Jesus: “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2). Not nature and creation, not miraculous events in history or individual lives, not judgment and the close of the age, not any manifestation of power, but the cross and broken body resurrected—that’s the emblem of our theology and our image of God now. Our theology of the cross locates God and glory where for all the world’s imaginations there can be nothing divine. As Hebrews puts it, “But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone” (Hebr. 2:9). Our students, like our

culture in general, are often looking for God in all the wrong places. We need a coarse, splintered, bloodstained cross in every quad and courtyard to which each of our lessons and policies can be nailed. (See Kolb, 1993, p. 20ff. See also McGrath, 1985, p. 148.)

8. Christian Liberty

Early in the Reformation, Luther composed a maxim within which he sought to locate all Christian decisions. His couplet has kept thoughtful Christians busy for centuries working out its implications. He began his treatise on “The Freedom of a Christian” this way:

The Christian is free lord of all, subject to none.

The Christian is servant of all, subject to all. (Dillenberger, 1962, p. 42)

Since the Gospel is true that God’s grace actually covers all our sin and that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ (Rom 8:39), then the Christian has perfect liberty to choose and act in any way she or he believes is in keeping with God’s Word and coming kingdom. Abraham was prepared to slay his own son. With great distress, Ezra ordered the divorce of Jews who had married non-Jews. John the Baptist recklessly engaged in moral criticism of Herod. Luther questioned but quietly sanctioned the bigamy of one of Germany’s princes. Bonhoeffer joined in the effort to assassinate Hitler. The Gospel frees us to make difficult decisions because no action or choice, however wise or wrong-headed, can cancel the saving power of the Gospel.

Paradoxically, that same Christian is also the most humble servant or *doulos* (Greek for slave) to every neighbor. That Christian must make choices and take actions that serve others both temporally and eternally. This Christian liberty, then, is the liberty both to take action and to serve. The Christian is empowered and emboldened to enact this servant liberty by the absolute promise of the Gospel that no work of ours can jeopardize what God has already done for us in Christ. Therefore, Luther declares, “Sin boldly—but believe more boldly still.” This is not an ethic of rules or simplistic means-and-ends principles. Rather, we need curriculum and policy for education that informs inquirers and equips students with a sound understanding of servanthood, a growing knowledge of God’s Word, and a bold trust in his promises.⁷

⁷A related theme that deserves attention is *adiaphora*, that area of Christian conduct that is neither commanded nor forbidden by God’s Word. For an extended

9. The Two Kingdoms

Since the fall there are, in fact, two kingdoms or realms of God, not just one. This is a linch-pin doctrine of the Reformation. The right-handed kingdom, as Luther called it, is God's kingdom of grace that is ruled by the grace of Christ in which the Holy Spirit by the power of the Gospel makes Christians and forms disciples. The left-handed kingdom is God's secular kingdom of the world that is ruled through law by people in various stations of temporal authority to preserve order in a fallen, sinful creation. God has established both kingdoms. Only the Gospel can prevail in the right-handed kingdom, not the Law. The Law is the primary authority in the left-handed kingdom, sustaining order in a fallen creation so that the Gospel can be proclaimed (cf. Mt. 24:14). Christians in their vocations are called to live simultaneously in both kingdoms. This is not easy to do. Lutheran educators must exist and conduct their ministry in both kingdoms. This is not easy to do. The teaching ministry inducts students into this two-kingdom living. This is not easy to do. We have the difficult task of instructing both through curriculum and policy so that all of us learn to rightly distinguish and not confuse the two kingdoms even as we must learn to live effectively for God in both. The two-kingdom doctrine gives us our basis for participation in politics, the sciences, the arts, business, and all other human activities in the left-handed kingdom. Because these are our activities and works in the temporal realm of the world, our participation—right, wrong, or otherwise—cannot alter what God has done for us in his realm of grace apart from our works. (See Paul's powerful statement in Rom. 8:31-39.) Understanding the two realms is Luther's key for us in doing education that preserves the Gospel yet enables us to explore any and all human claims about truth, beauty, and a life well lived. (See Dillenberger, 1962, p. 363 and Braaten, 1983, p. 123.)

10. Vocation

"God gets up every morning and milks the cows." With this peculiar claim, Luther sets out another linch-pin doctrine of the Reformation that complements all the others: the doctrine of vocation (I Cor. 7:17ff). When the farmer milks his cows, he is doing God's work every bit as much as any monk or priest (or Lutheran teacher or pastor). By milking those cows, the farmer provides sustenance for people either to continue their own lives for another day as God's people in service to others or to live another day and have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and come to faith. So

study of this important topic see T. Graebner (1953).

Lutherans insist that every Christian has a vocation, or a calling to faith and Christian living, and that no one vocation is more pleasing to God than any other. Lutheran Christians honor God by honoring all people in all stations of life that provide service, work, care, and respect for others. The smallest child learning her ABCs and the oldest retiree providing care for that child have vocations from God. Lutheran education does more than pay occasional lip service to vocation. It designs to help students link the call of the Gospel to productive human activity as ways to share God's goodness, especially his great goodness in Christ. (See Vieth, 1999, p. 71.)

Conclusion

Some have suggested that the most effective way to offer Christian education today is to emphasize that our education is Christian and de-emphasize that it is Lutheran. This point has

merit in the sense that 1) Lutheran education has at times been exclusive and ethnocentric, and 2) most people are no longer much interested in denominational boundaries. A constructive take on this view is that we highlight the Christ of Christian education and avoid

denominational triumphalism. The danger, however, is that we may end up marketing a store-brand Christianity that conveys little substance for shaping a Christian life. This strategy may be ineffectively casuistic and misleading, especially in secondary and higher education.

By contrast, a Lutheran education that deliberately communicates the Biblical, Lutheran tradition and ethos will do students a world of good, both for this world and the world to come. Non-Lutherans, believers and unbelievers alike, will receive a distinct, historically extended, community-embodied worldview located in sources they can access and evaluate as grounds for standards, judgments, authority, the good, and meaning and purpose. What's more, these sources and ideas are *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, and *sola scriptura* in nature. In these times of spiritual diversity, no one needs just one more bland, vapid, church-affiliated education. We do others a

In these times of spiritual diversity, no one needs just one more bland, vapid, church-affiliated education. We do others a great disservice by veiling in merely generic education the goodness of God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ.

great disservice by veiling in merely generic education the goodness of God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. Instead, we have a heritage and the resources to present to them an identity and a community they can consider seriously and against which they can compare other claims.

Meanwhile, Lutherans will receive an account and induction into their own community that does not isolate and inoculate them from the world, but prepares them to understand the world and bring to it that Word of life for today and eternity.⁸ The Reformation insights into the Gospel are not intended to return us to the sixteenth century any more than the Reformers' study of the early church fathers sought to recreate the world of the Roman Empire. The Gospel is God's message of reconciliation for all people of all times. These insights of the Lutheran tradition give Lutheran education a distinctively Gospel-oriented substance and structure. Being distinctive in this evangelical way is not sectarian provincialism. Rather it makes us a province with open and inviting borders for all who might glimpse, desire, and receive with joy that abundant life in Christ.⁹

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⁸Much has been written in recent years about the relationship of the church to the modern and post-modern world. See S. Hauerwas and W. Willimon (1989) for one effort to consider how the church can remain distinctively in the world but not of the world. Also Menuge (1999) presents an engaging assortment of essays on the church in the world.

Moulds

3 Vol. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

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“It will always be mistaken to try to fashion a purely ‘Lutheran’ understanding of what Christian higher education ought to be. But if there is a reason for the continued existence of such institutions, they must offer something distinctive and distinctively Christian.”

Gilbert Meilaender, *LE*, Jan./Feb. 1999

Athens vs. Jerusalem: Christian Instruction or Nurture?

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A challenge in my ministry relates to the argument of “Athens vs. Jerusalem.” Is my institution, Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC), a Christian *liberal arts* college or is it a *Christian liberal arts* college? The ongoing tension at WLC, which the Academic Dean calls “healthy,” is just that question. Of course, almost all people will answer that it is not a matter of one or the other, but that we can be both. I believe that view is fair enough, and the goal is attainable, but the situation is like sitting at the sharp pinnacle of a mountain continually teetering back and forth. It is a balance that is very difficult to maintain.

The Perspective

By the *Christian* aspect what I mean is that which Yale professor Iris Cully (1967) calls “nurture” (p. 258). This is not the typical “Athens vs. Jerusalem” argument, but rather one aspect of it that is more applied. How does viewing your institution as a Christian college play out in the classroom and beyond? Seeing students as fellow Christian souls on the sanctified path to heaven gives one a particular perspective in approaching the classroom. This

approach can and should be different from the purely “instructive” approach that would fall closer to a secular “liberal arts” emphasis or perspective. At one point a colleague told me I was “coddling” the students because I was taking too much interest in how they were doing in their other classes and extra curricular activities. What I saw as positive nurturing, he saw negatively from a different view. This view is much more restrictive of a Christian professor. This view is one of “instruction” almost exclusively.

Let me make the case for nurture at the college level. Iris Cully (1967) states, “The human factor cannot be avoided in the educative process” (p. 257). The extreme of the instructive view would seem to almost see teaching as devoid of any human element. And an obvious response is: how can this be? Indeed, Cully (1967) seems to answer the question when she says, “No teacher can avoid the role of significant adult whom the learner imitates” (p. 259). Then better we should learn how to be nurturers and role models than to deny the role even exists.

But is nurture appropriate at the college level? Pastor and teacher Alan Jahsmann (1962) gives an interesting perspective: “The church has the inescapable necessity of being concerned about every phase of an individual’s life, including his total education at *any age level* [emphasis mine]” (p. 33,34). At the college level the students have reached the legal age of adult, and we should surely treat them as such. I would even argue that there is nothing worse at the college level than treating them like they are still in high school. They are now responsible for their own education, and we need to fully recognize that in and out of the classroom. *But spiritual nurture does not stop at any age!* As college professors, we are a significant spiritual role in students’ lives at a critical point! They are leaving the comfortable spiritual confines of their homes and parents to become independent explorers of the world around them. We are not their parents. But we are their guides on the journey for at least the years between 18 and 22, and if we are fortunate, some will even seek our guidance beyond graduation

What opens the door to nurture is the fact that the Christian school “makes it possible to apply the Word of God to all subjects and all situations” (Miller, 1964, p. 106). This should not stop at the college level; it does, however, begin to be difficult. The reason? At my institution all faculty have advanced degrees, either masters or doctorates. We know that the secular academic world scoffs at putting a Christian view on education and learning. The difficulty is for the individual. We want respect from our peers in our particular fields. Can we go to a conference and openly discuss how we are teaching our subjects from a Christian perspective? What happens most often is the whole subject is avoided all together with our secular colleagues.

However, this is more of a personal problem. The problem as an educator is when the desire for the Christian professor to be just like his/her secular colleagues leads the professor to start teaching from a secular viewpoint out of a desire to give our students “the same education as they get at _____” (pick your favorite institution.) This was a personal struggle of mine in my first two years of teaching. I felt a *moral* obligation to give my Christian students the same quality education as students were getting at UW-Stevens Point or MIT (my undergraduate and graduate *alma maters*, respectively.) My mistake was in taking that worthwhile principle and applying it by avoiding any hint of religion in my formal classroom presentation.

Quality education does not equal secular education. I learned this lesson in later years and through a course I took on Christian education. The transition point is turning from seeing oneself as merely an instructor to seeing oneself as a *minister* who is interested in the

whole student not just the one who sits in your class from 9:00 to 9:55 am!

James Bartz (1979) makes an interesting point on this: “The call, then, is for that special kind of teacher who sees that perhaps the most significant aspect of his service lies not in instruction but in ministry” (p. 183). This

It is all too easy for Christian college faculty to lose their focus on ministry in their “ivory towers.” Therefore, we would do well to resist such a shift toward the secular by continually asking ourselves what it means to be a minister of the Gospel.

key aspect of Christian teaching is exactly what can be lost most easily at the college level. “We are academicians, we are not grade school teachers!” This is one extreme view that could happen in a place where instruction takes precedence over all else. It is all too easy for Christian college faculty to lose their focus on ministry in their “ivory towers.” Therefore, we would do well to resist such a shift toward the secular by continually asking ourselves what it means to be a *minister of the Gospel*.

Christian education is also about seeing students as fellow Christian souls. This is a view that is anathema to secular faculty, and that many in the “instruction” camp on the Christian campus would look down upon for fear that it might in some way weaken academic rigor. “Yes, they are Christian students, but that shouldn’t change how we interact with them as teachers,” or should it? I think so. How? “What is

called for is personal involvement" (Bartz, 1979, p. 184). Bartz's statement puts a finger on the very thing that is lacking from the "instruction" perspective. Personal involvement in students' lives is driven by a desire to nurture them in education. Though Bartz was writing for the Christian high school, his point has even more relevance to the Christian college as our students are discovering Christian adulthood. I have been in numerous situations of the type he describes: "intimate, pointed, rubber-meets-the-road kind of sharing that can set aside profession and status and step down into the position where sinner meets sinner and the redeemed supports the redeemed" (Bartz, 1979, p. 184). Through these encounters I have grown spiritually, and I believe the student has grown spiritually. And so much more than that—you become *real* to them. You are a real, live, living college professor who is a strong Christian, a spiritual guidepost. In so many ways we can't even imagine what that means to a student. This is especially true for the confused college student, who is thinking independently for the first time in his life. Why, then, is not more Christian faculty personally involved in their students' lives? I believe a central reason is that we have been conditioned by our education that there is a great gulf between those with a Masters or Ph.D. degree and the undergraduate student. We dare not cross that divide, though we know not why. Christian professors must throw off the mantle that secular graduate education has laid upon us, which separates us from fellow Christian souls—our students.

Finally, an important aspect of the Christian teacher as nurturer, is the ability to be nurtured, both by colleagues and by our students. A very key point is one made by John Isch: "The ability to teach also includes the ability to learn, to evaluate one's own teaching, to seek ways to improve, and the willingness to listen to the advice of others regarding one's work" (1999, p. 226). It seems more than a coincidence that in my experience the professors who were least interested in not only instructing their students, but also nurturing them, were also the ones who were least interested in taking constructive criticism or friendly suggestions about their own teaching. There may be an important connection here; if we are unwilling to be nurtured, are we also unable to nurture? Isch's point resonates with me because of a statement made to me when interviewing for a position at Oberlin College. The chairman of the chemistry department said, "We expect that you don't have much teaching experience. That's not important. What is important is that you are bright and show the ability to learn how to teach." How true! We need the ability to look inward first, to improve ourselves, to know what it is to learn. The teacher who can do that will naturally nurture his or her students out of Christian love and because it enhances learning.

The Future

What does the future hold, then, for nurture on the Christian college campus? Will the pressures of secular academia win out? Will we be beholden to rankings in *U.S. News & World Report*, recruiting faculty with degrees from prestigious *secular* institutions, long lists of scholarly publications by faculty in *secular* journals, average ACT/SAT scores of entering freshman? The future of maintaining a healthy balance between instruction and nurture at Christian colleges will be bright as long as leaders who believe in maintaining that balance are in place in these institutions. The discussions will likely forever go on within the faculty, and that can be healthy as the faculty continually redefines what “Christian” means in all areas of academic study, but leadership is critical

when setting direction and tone of an institution.

When Christian colleges begin to emphasize academic position and reputation above their Christian character, they lose focus on nurture and the idea that is central to their purpose: preparing the spirit of their students as well as their minds.

Nurturing students is applicable in *both* areas.

On the personal level, faculty members who

believe in the importance of nurture of their students can make a difference by continuing to discuss with colleagues the importance of the Christian aspect of the college and the total education they are providing. Individuals should encourage colleagues on a one-to-one basis to not leave the nurturing aspect of teaching undeveloped and hopefully lead them to see the importance and appropriateness of nurture in their ministries. Department and institutional leaders should also emphasize the nurturing aspects of education, and where appropriate, reward activities in these areas. Finally, however, there are some faculty members that will never *get it*. With these it is wise to respectfully disagree and move on; not to lose hope, but to not let them be a burden or a stumbling block to your ministry as a Christian educator. I

When Christian colleges begin to emphasize academic position and reputation above their Christian character, they lose focus on nurture and the idea that is central to their purpose: preparing the spirit of their students as well as their minds. Nurturing students is applicable in both areas.

believe in what I am doing, how I am teaching and the importance of nurture in Christian education, and I cannot let the disagreement of others change that.

Conclusion

Athens vs. Jerusalem, instruction vs. nurture, the two are not mutually exclusive, so the title should really read "Instruction *and* Nurture." The nurturing aspect in Christian higher education is of very high importance, so much so that we dare not place value judgments on it. I have argued nurture's place in Christian higher education particularly because this is the place where its validity would be (and is) questioned most strongly. But we must look at the whole student, not as a vessel to be filled with our lofty 'professions', but as fellow Christian souls to be guided by us (teachers!) through God's wondrous creation. It is indeed a high calling to teach. Let's not merely instruct them, but nurture them also.

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Sport and Religion: An Ancient Communion?

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“There is, however, a fundamental difference between obligatory pre-game locker room prayers and the worship of the gods by means of an athletic festival. For the Jicarillo Apache running between the circles of the sun and the moon or the Athenian youth racing in the stadium built above the sacred way at Delphi, the contest was in itself a religious act. For most contemporary athletes, even for those who ask for divine assistance in the game, the contest is a secular event” (Guttman, 1992, p. 149).

But just how much of a difference? Is our modern sacred way the playoff road to the Super Bowl, or the road to the Final Four? Are the travels of the torch to Salt Lake City our circles of the sun and moon? Clearly the Baron Pierre de Coubertin would have thought so. “The first essential characteristic of ancient and of modern Olympism alike is that of being a religion. By chiseling his body with exercise as a sculptor chisels a statue the athlete of antiquity was ‘honouring the gods.’ In doing likewise the modern athlete exalts his country, his race, his flag. I therefore think I was right to recreate from the outset, around the renewed Olympism, a religious sentiment”

(Korsgaard, 1990, p. 115).

To Charles Prebish, sport and religion are one. "For me, it is not just a parallel that is emerging between sport and religion, but rather a complete identity. Sport is religion for many Americans, and this is no product of simple facile reasoning or wishful thinking. Further, for many, sport religion has become a more appropriate expression of personal religiosity than Christianity, Judaism, or any of the traditional religions" (Higgs, 1995, p. 19).

Michael Novak takes a different view describing sports as a natural religion with all the dignity previously accorded revealed religion. He argues that sports partake of the divine because they foster glorious abstractions: "being, beauty, truth, excellence, and transcendence" (Higgs, 1995, p. 19).

The purpose of this article is not one of proof, but one of enlightenment, skepticism, questioning, and probing, allowing ideas to ruminate in readers' thoughts and experiences. Certainly we are aware of relationships between sport or physical activity, and various cultural phenomena: harvest, marriage, death, and preparation for war to name just a few; but are there other and deeper relationships?

Lessons from Judaism

Jewish history includes several instances of the interface/clash of religion and sport. Occasional mentions of sporting activities and athletic facilities are found in the writings of Josephus. Marcus Ilius Agrippa, the grandson of Herod I, grew up in Rome and had a Roman attitude toward public games. He was a close friend of Gaius (Caligula) who virtually demanded of his friends that they share in his passion for spectacles. Josephus chronicles three episodes of sport history during the reign of Agrippa.

1. Simon the Pharisee declared Agrippa unclean and to be excluded from the temple because he had attended a festival in Caesarea. The dispute centered on the fact that nowhere in the Torah is it expressly forbidden to participate in, or attend, athletic or musical contests/performances. Simon erred in not pointing out that these games were associated with a cultic festival and were, therefore, idolatrous (Laemmer, 1981, pp. 9-11).
2. In a second episode Agrippa put on a lavish gladiatorial contest of 700 vs. 700 until the last man was alive. These men were all criminals and this was their punishment. "In this way he brought about the utter annihilation of these men" (Laemmer, 1981, pp. 12-13).
3. Agrippa celebrated a "Games" at Caesarea in April or May of 44 A.D. in honor of

Claudius Caesar who had just returned in triumph from conquering Britain. The games were called “ludi pro salute Claudius.” Upon his entry on the second day, resplendent in beautiful robe, the throng greeted him with shouts of “theos” which he did not disclaim. He was immediately struck by a disease, from which he died five days later. Both Jews and Christians view his death as punishment for having accepted a tribute meant only for God (Acts 12: 19-23) (Laemmer, 1981, p. 13)!

A summary of the Jewish sport ethic is provided in Micah, 6:8.

It has been told thee, oh man, what is good,
And what the Lord doth require of thee;
Only to do justly, to love mercy, and
To walk humbly with thy God.

Sport presents an ethical paradox. In sport, one person has the responsibility and authority to confront

the participant(s) and demand conformity with the rules: the referee. This can produce difficult circumstances (often leading to a game within a game, with the athletes attempting to circumvent the rules without the referee noticing). Judaism with its emphasis on truth, justice, and

Children who are socialized through sport to a particular value system reach adulthood, and they, in turn, through their involvement as teachers, coaches, and administrators transmit these values to the next generation.

acceptance of responsibility for one's own behavior, rejects such thinking. In sport, a tacit agreement to obey the rules exists amongst the athletes before they enter the contest. The failure to own up to a transgression of the rules in any sport is an attempt to mislead the referee into rendering a decision that is not in accord with the deed, or act, hence the conclusion that such behavior is considered as bearing false witness.

Try to imagine a professional or big-time university sporting event played in such a manner; or perhaps, more practically, a kickball game on a school playground at recess. Children who are socialized through sport to a particular value system reach

adulthood, and they, in turn, through their involvement as teachers, coaches, and administrators transmit these values to the next generation.

Muscular Christianity

The combination of religion and sport was combustible enough to create a new genre of literature as well as a vehicle for worldwide evangelism: muscular Christianity! The origin of this term is somewhat obscure but appears to have its genesis in eighteenth and nineteenth-century British fiction. An early example is found in the fictional novel, *The History of William Langley* by William Belve, published in 1792. The fictional Langley, a pious Christian schoolboy, may have been the first “muscular Christian” in children’s literature. In 1857, the fictional Tom Brown was described as thoroughly British and acknowledged as the epitome of Victorian “muscular Christianity.” In such novels the sentiments of play fairly and avoid cheating had been resurrected in many children’s books in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The nineteenth century was the preeminently European century of world history, in which Europe was able to impose its will on virtually the whole of the inhabited world. “With these European conquerors of Asia and Africa went the religion of Europe—Christianity!” (Mangan, 1983, p. 78). This was especially so in England where a religious awakening paralleled economic and imperial interests. The muscular Christian of fiction was about to become flesh and blood!

Missionaries took sports (cricket, rowing, football, field hockey) to Africa, Melanesia, and the Indian sub-continent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sports were used as the method of conversion: both cultural and religious! Three great examples of these “muscular Christians” are illustrative of this phenomenon. Theodore Leighton Pennell (1867-1912) was a medical missionary to the tribes of Afghanistan. Here he recreated a British-style school in exquisite detail, including cold baths. He described how he changed the native peoples “from the indigenous sports of tent-pegging and wrestling to the missionary school games of cricket and football” (Mangan, 1983, p. 81). At precisely the same time a comrade, A. G. Fraser, was effecting similar changes among the Tamils and Sinhalese at Trinity College in Ceylon.

The “crème de la crème” of imperial Christianity was Cecil Earle Tyndale-Biscoe who, even as a child, wished to go to Africa. He never made it. The Church Missionary Society sent him to the Kashmir where he would spend his entire life. His credo:

Christianity is a life that has to be lived. Christ Jesus was a perfect man as well as

God, and to be a Christian one has to strive after perfect manliness—strength of body, strength of intellect strength of soul—and to show that strength by practical sympathy for the weak. It is only those who are true men who can appreciate the ideal man. Someone has to create desire for the ideal, and this cannot be done by talk, but by putting before the boys our great example Christ Jesus, and asking them to join us in trying to follow that life, the life of service! (Mangan, 1983, p. 81)

Interestingly, we shall see this philosophical triad incorporated some years later into the triangular logo of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA): body, mind, and spirit.

As the nineteenth century waned, another movement took hold in England some years prior to moving to North America: sabbatarianism. This movement begged the question: How were Sundays to be spent? In 1895 the Reverend Francis Peake, Secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society (LDOS) described clearly the duties of the Christian on Sunday: "Public instruction, public worship, the instruction of the young, the visiting of the sick, looking after people who are in trouble and difficulty, and showing acts of kindness" (Lowerson, 1983, p. 50).

Things were stirring at this time in conflict with Rev. Peake's admonition. The middle and lower classes sought relief from the six-day workweek and viewed Sunday as that day. A class battle was also in play. The wealthy could hunt, ride, and golf on their lands. The "underclass" wanted the similar options in terms of rowing on the Thames, pick-up games of football, and cricket on park lawns. The game of golf would eventually become a major factor in this upheaval as well! Opinion on the matter was split among clergy also. The vicar of Giggleswick in North Yorkshire placed the following notice on his church porch inviting worshippers to come in cycling dress if need be: "You do not sin cycling on Sunday, but you do most certainly sin against God and wrong your neighbor if you neglect your clear duty, which is to publicly adore your Saviour, Jesus the Christ" (Lowerson, 1983, p. 56).

The fears of the LDOS came to pass, however. One of the consequences of this upheaval was that religion, rather than sport became the peripheral activity on Sunday, with a decline in attendance from 50% in the 1850's to 10% in the 1980's." Like the YMCA, this also has crossed the Atlantic. Can we any longer dispute that sport, most especially football and golf, is not the primary activity on Sundays in the United States?

A twenty-first century attempt at conveying Christian principles and truths has been seen on a number of billboards along Michigan's Interstate Highways. These billboards provide "messages from God," one of which particularly speaks to this

issue: "Let's meet at my house Sunday before the game. GOD."

Off to the Americas

The Puritans brought with them a practical attitude toward physical recreation and games. Sermon notes from three leaders: Michael Wigglesworth (1653-57), Cotton Mather (1681-1724), and Samuel Sewell (1674-1729) speak poorly of idle play but do commend martial sports, as these might provide for protection (Higgs, 1995, p. 22).

As immigration continued sport began an alliance with higher education that exists to this day. The earliest history of this was associated with Congregationalists and Presbyterians and linked with Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. It has certainly continued to this day with a host of colleges and universities affiliated with various religious precepts, traditions, and controls.

Philip Lindsley (1786-1855), while vice-president at Princeton, included Physical Education and organized athletics in the university curriculum. Some of his rationale has a very current ring. Sports participation should provide "complete enjoyment; of a proper kind for all the time of the individual. Keep your youth busy (giving off steam) and you keep them out of harm's way" (Wertenbaker, 1946, p. 163). If left to their own discretion they will spend their time in "idle lounging, talking, smoking, and sleeping" (Lindsley, 1825, p. 25). Does this sound like college students today: MTV, ESPN, video sports games, a rationale for midnight basketball leagues?

Lindsley anchored his educational philosophy in scripture: Proverbs 22:6. He had a wholistic view of education and was one of the earliest educators to describe a *mens sana in corpore sano* (a sound mind in a sound body). Higgs (1995), in assessing Lindsley's view makes a very cutting statement. "We may be more afraid of the mind than ever. The proof lies in our treatment of the athlete, whom we ask to pray before a sporting event but fail to educate in a meaningful way through the week" (p. 52).

North American Muscular Christianity took two especially different forms. One was a rural, Appalachian, Scotch-Irish, warrior form; the other an Eastern, Ivy-League, English, YMCA form.

The Frontier

The Scotch-Irish immigrants from the Celtic Fringe of Great Britain settled in large numbers in the Appalachian frontier. Their forms of sport were crude and in some cases especially gruesome. Rough and tumble fighting (gouging) was prominent.

Such fighting went beyond the pale with combatants sharpening their nails and filing their teeth in order to bite off an ear or pluck out an eye. In such fights those who left scarred or maimed also gained a quarter of respect for their bravery. Names like "Fighting Creek" and "Gouge Eye" memorialize these gruesome events (Gorn, 1985, p. 64).

The frontier also saw "sporting clergy" associated with camp meetings and exercises: rolling, barking, dancing, and laughing/singing (Cleveland, 1916, p. 101). With time more violent exercises made their entry, confronting ministers with a dilemma from scripture: "Bodily exercise profiteth little" (I Tm 4:8). Certainly St. Paul's advice to his young colleague was not directed at such earthly matters. This era and region also spawned widespread animosity among denominations with protestants bickering among themselves, and all of them railing against the Catholics.

The Catholics did not suffer so meekly! They looked upon the camp meetings as an excuse for drunkenness and partying. A story from the era is illustrative. At a Catholic country picnic in upstate New York, Theron Ware, a Methodist minister, finds ballgames, wrestling, swimming and wading, and today what we would call a beer tent, where "twenty men in shirtsleeves toiled ceaselessly to keep abreast of the crowd's thirst for beer" (Clark, 1939, p. 235). Ware tells his new Catholic friends, "I am in love with your sinners. . . . I've had five days with the saints over in another part of the woods, and they've bored the head off me" (Clark, p. 237).

What Catholics found most objectionable at the time was not the enjoyment of a "holiday," but the conjoining of amusement with worship. Today many Catholics and Protestants seem to have come to an ecumenical view that allows the Gordian Knot of sports and leisure to take over Sundays.

The Eastern Establishment

Just prior to the Civil War, the Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in New York told his counterpart in Richmond. "Your Christians will meet ours in battle" (Hopkins, 1951, p. 87). Such is indicative of another thrust of North American Muscular Christianity: the tangled web of faith, athletics, education, and the military. The concept of *mens sana in corpore sano* first articulated by Lindsley produced a chain of decisions in higher education that, it can be argued, continues to this day. The Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) debuted in 1854 in Baltimore with a goal to support spirituality and physical fitness on the model the YMCA (Riess, 1998, p. 9). In the 1880's the YMHA hired Turners (devotees of Friedrich Jahn's program of gymnastics exercises) to supervise and guide their fitness programs. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century a number of YMHA leaders espoused Muscular

Judaism (Rabinowitz, 1948, pp. 11-12).

In 1875 a Jewish periodical, *The New Era*, published a critique of intercollegiate sports programs. The criticism was leveled mainly at Cornell University, and its President Andrew White, following his braggadocio regarding the varsity eight rowing team. "If the students of a college be told by their president, that the victorious crew have done more to make their college known than all the men of worth and learning that have emerged from its halls, what wonder can it be, if these students attach more importance to the exercise of rowing than to the furnishing of the chambers of the mind?" (Oren, 1985, p. 35).

Athletics began at the United States Military Academy (West Point) in 1899; but "bodily exercises" (physical education) had begun in 1817, initiated by Superintendent Sylvanus Thayer. In 1817 Philip Lindsley was chosen vice-president of Princeton and also advocated for physical education of the West Point model.

Thomas Higginson penned an essay, "Saints and Their Bodies," in *Atlantic Magazine* in 1885. He ascribed to the concepts of the modern English Broad Church aimed at "breadth of shoulders as well as doctrines" and felt his own times were characterized by weakness. He admired "robust saints" such as George, Michael, and Martin and was convinced the Greek honoring of manliness was waning. "What satirists upon religion are those parents who say of their pallid, puny, sedentary offspring, 'He is born for a minister,' while the ruddy, the brave and the strong are as promptly assigned to a secular career!" (p. 84).

To Higginson, the Service Academies were models of proper education. George Bancroft founded the United States Naval Academy in 1845 and he too instituted physical education. Earlier in his career Bancroft, along with a colleague, Joseph Green Cogswell had established the first program of physical education at Round Hill School, Northampton, Massachusetts with a goal "to preserve the health and improve the morals and mental powers" (Marburg-Cappel, 1976, p. 236).

Some eastern colleges spawned YMCA chapters on their campuses, each seemingly coincident with the establishment of physical education and intercollegiate athletics. Yale University's teams, especially, prevailed in numerous and varied athletic endeavors. Concurrently, Dwight L. Moody was establishing the Christian Social Union, which two years later became the YMCA. In 1901 the YMCA chapter at Yale had 1000 members and at the same time, its greatest football team! A number of YMCA chapters were formed on campuses in the Midwest, with the University of Michigan's among the largest.

Yale also became the locus of an American form of heroic fictional literature akin to the English Tom Brown stories: the Frank Merriwell series. Frank Merriwell

personified the “Yale Spirit.” A great athlete, accomplished scholar, and ever a gentleman, he defended the Negro and the Jew. Patten, the author of this series, was himself a subscriber to “*mens sana in corpore sano*” and clearly an advocate of fair play and sportsmanship. To this day we still use the Frank Merriwell descriptor for unlikely success, a stirring victory by an underdog, or the long road back from failure.

As noted above, the rise of intercollegiate athletics was temporally allied with the influence of the YMCA. Springfield College, Massachusetts, was established to train YMCA leasers. This institution nurtured the early careers of several icons in the history of North American sport. Amos Alonzo Stagg, James Naismith, and A.G. Spalding all matriculated at Springfield and became three young physical educators who would play foundational roles in the development of three major American sports: football, basketball, and baseball. Naismith, by his hiring of W. G. Morgan, aided in the foundation of

yet another sport: volleyball! The inspirational leader of the YMCA philosophy in the United States was Luther Gulick, the inventor of the ‘Y’ logo and a passionate muscular Christian.

Athletae Dei

Muscular Christianity and the athletes of God survive, more correctly thrive, in myriad forms

today. One collegiate athletic association encompasses Christianity in its very purpose: the National Christian College Athletic Association, formed in the mid-1960’s, sponsors championships, recruits Christian athletes to campus, and provides witness opportunities. Others, such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Athletes in Action, have chapters on college campuses and sponsor mission trips in the United States and abroad. One might pose some questions here: Are coaches of Christian teams permitted to get a technical foul? Are they to use trickery or subterfuge, within the rules, to gain a competitive advantage? Is “working the referee” within the moral guidelines of Christian athletics?

Today’s Athletae Dei give post-game testimonials regarding Jesus’ aid in the

One might pose some questions here: Are coaches of Christian teams permitted to get a technical foul? Are they to use trickery or subterfuge, within the rules, to gain a competitive advantage? Is “working the referee” within the moral guidelines of Christian athletics?

victory. How does one explain that when two Christian schools compete one will lose? Is winning a measure of greater or truer faith, or orthodoxy?

Rogers (1972, pp. 392-94) does not find the sport/religion connection surprising, since from time immemorial each has had a similar goal: to propitiate the gods! Higgs (1992) dissents against such sanctification of sport and play and the accompanying secularization of religion. He decries the loudness of muscular Christians, and bemoans the "selling of Christ like soap" (p. 101).

I close with two final thoughts from Higgs: "I believe that though sports and play may provide aesthetic pleasure, natural delight, and rest for the soul and mind, they are not inherently divine and should be watched over very carefully lest they show signs of corruption, one of which is an encroachment upon the domain of religion in ways far more subtle than Sunday baseball and on the other hand far less obvious than "karate for Christ," the signs in all cases being indications of paganism or nature worship" (p. 101). And, "In its passion for visibility and influence in high places, Muscular Christianity has lost knowledge of the invisible, that is, holy. The old ideal of quietude has yielded to emotion and incessant yelping about God" (p. 101).✚

Epilogue

"All those coaches who require pre-game prayer for their players ought to be made to attend church once a week."

Duffy Daugherty

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Fresh Perspectives on Jesus: Teaching *All* the Evidence

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Never underestimate how teachers open young minds and shape careers! While it may be less than graceful to begin with a personal illustration, I can attest to the fact that the whole direction of my professional research as an ancient historian began back in parochial school. I was so intrigued and “turned on” by teachers who colorfully related the biblical episodes that I always wanted to know more. But they responded that there really was no more to tell, and that I had to be content with the information supplied in the Old and New Testaments.

Happily, it turned out that they were mistaken on that point. There is indeed more to tell about the places, people, and events that gave birth to our faith when we import secular evidence to supplement the sacred record. Jesus of Nazareth is a case in point.

No figure in all of history has provoked such extreme reactions. While believers acclaim him as the Son of God and Savior of the World, others have disputed or misinterpreted his teachings, rejected them entirely, or even denied that the man ever existed. It hardly seems possible, in view of the overwhelming evidence, that his historicity should be questioned or denied, and yet I continue to get

messages on the Internet from skeptics, apparently blind to the facts and motivated by some forlorn hope that there never was a Jesus, who parrot the worthless arguments of past atheists. Sad.

Today, the vast majority of non-Christians share, in various ways, the following opinion: Jesus certainly existed, but he was not who believers claim he was, since his words and deeds were augmented or invented by Gospel writers many years after the events they reported, a time frame in which myth had overlaid the facts.

Quite apart from a believer's vested interest in the reliability of the New Testament record, *anyone* interested in the past should wish to know if the accounts of Jesus that have come down to us in the Gospels are trustworthy or have been encrusted with fantasy.

Comparing biblical and non-biblical evidence—the sacred and the secular—is one important way to gauge the reliability of evidence on Jesus. In fact, such a comparison yields three additional benefits by providing: 1) fresh color, depth, and dimension to the New Testament accounts; 2) solutions to some of the difficulties in those accounts; and 3) a means of filling in some of the gaps in the Gospel records.

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Comparing biblical and non-biblical evidence—the sacred and the secular—is one important way to gauge the reliability of evidence on Jesus.

The secular sources most helpful for this purpose are geography, archaeology, and extrabiblical historical evidence. In using these, we will see that the New Testament accounts of Jesus, far from being warped by myth, report just as historical a personality as the Roman emperor Augustus in whose reign he was born. This statement—so obvious to Christians and the fair-minded anywhere—needs to be emphasized in a secular world in which improbable claims from competing, non-historically-based religious systems have created a link in many minds between religion and mythology. Young people in particular, who have been taught “Bible

stories” much of their lives, might easily mix the two.

Christians have every reason to welcome *when* and *where* questions about Jesus, since they can be answered so easily.

Jesus and Time

Mythical personalities and events are not open to questions involving time. One does not ask, for example, “In what year did Zeus and Hera get married?” Historical figures, on the other hand, should be generally datable within a reasonable range of years if the sources provide enough evidence. After the patriarchs in the Old Testament and across the rest of the Bible, such dating of most major personalities and episodes in Scripture is not only possible but even expected in our biblical dictionaries and commentaries.

In the case of Jesus, his Nativity can reliably be placed between June and December of 5 B.C. (Maier, 1989). The start of his public ministry is also datable, thanks to Luke, who is at pains to give us a specific time for the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry and therefore of Jesus’ also:

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. (Luke 3:1)

Since the dates of the Roman emperor Tiberius are “set in concrete” by ancient historians, Luke has provided six documentary “footnotes,” as it were, to fix the year as A.D. 28/29, according to our present calendar (of which Luke knew nothing in his day). This is unusual precision for an ancient source, especially when compared with the hazy chronologies of such other religious luminaries as Gautama Buddha or Zoroaster.

As for the close of Jesus’ earthly ministry, various chronological clues in the New Testament and surrounding evidence point to 3 April, A.D. 33 as the date for his crucifixion at Golgotha (Maier, 1968). Accordingly, the chronological references involving Jesus presuppose him to be an authentic personality living at a specific time in history.

Jesus and Place

Since reality involves a “time-space continuum,” geographical considerations are also important in weighing the historicity of Jesus. Legends and mythologies have settings in Shangri-La, Nirvana, Never-Neverlands, Oz, Valhalla or other illusory

places, while the holy books of some “made-in-America” religious systems supply dubious names of imaginary locations that have never been discovered or referred to anywhere else.

The Old and New Testaments, on the other hand, are studded with authentic place names: names of countries, provinces, regions, cities, and villages; names of seas, lakes, rivers, brooks, and streams; names of mountains, hills, plateaus, plains, and valleys. Such proper names fill our Bible dictionaries, and all of them are standing challenges to any who doubt that the stage for the many divine-human encounters in Scripture is rock solid.

Most of the place names in Scripture are readily identifiable today, and many have been excavated archaeologically. In the case of Jesus, his journeys through life are traced by armies of pilgrims to the Holy Land to this day, from his birth at Bethlehem in Judea, through his youth at Nazareth in Galilee, across his public ministry in Capernaum, Samaria, and Judea, along his travels to Tyre, Sidon, and Caesarea-Philippi, and on to the culmination of his ministry in Jerusalem. *All* the locations associated with Jesus are authentic and situated just as described in the New Testament. The Pool of Siloam, for example, where Jesus healed the blind man of John 9, still exists in Jerusalem and still contains water, as does the Pool of Bethesda.

Following Jesus’ ministry, St. Paul’s mission journeys are so accurately described by Luke in the Book of Acts and Paul’s own letters that the itineraries can be confirmed today as absolutely accurate both in terms of location and in order of place names. From the patriarchs in the Old Testament, then, to the apostles in the New, God’s people always seemed to be moving from one place to the next. But such restless travelers also served a higher purpose that they could hardly have envisioned at the time: they provided authentic locational bases that are very helpful for gauging the reliability of the Bible in general and the life and ministry of Jesus in particular. The stage for the many, vivid biblical episodes is very solid indeed.

All time and place references associated with Jesus of Nazareth, then, presuppose an authentic personality, living at a definite time in history, and moving between specific sites that can easily be identified 2000 years later.

Archaeology and Jesus

Life stories pervaded by myth, like the tales of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, are notoriously deficient in terms of any “hard evidence” that they leave behind by way of artifacts above or below ground. In the case of Jesus and his times, however, scientific archaeology, though a very young discipline, has delivered a spectacular amount of hard evidence from the ancient world that correlates

admirably with information inside the New Testament. A whole series of articles would be possible on this theme alone, as, indeed, journals like *Bible & Spade* or *Biblical Archaeology Review* can more than attest. However, a brief listing limited to discoveries relating directly to the life of Jesus must suffice.

The existence of Nazareth in Jesus' day had been doubted by critics—until its name showed up in a first-century synagogue inscription at Caesarea Maritima. The census edicts of Augustus cited at the beginning of Luke's version of the Nativity are borne out by an inscription at Ankara, Turkey, the famous *Res Gestae* ("Things Accomplished"), in which the Roman emperor proudly claims to have taken a census three times. That husbands/fathers had to register their families by returning to their home villages for the Roman census is also mandated by several census papyri discovered in Egypt.

That Herod the Great ruled at the time Jesus was born is demonstrated by the numerous excavations of his massive public works in the Holy Land, including the great Temple in Jerusalem cited so frequently in the Gospels. When Jesus' disciples exclaimed, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent

All time and place references associated with Jesus of Nazareth, then, presuppose an authentic personality, living at a definite time in history, and moving between specific sites that can easily be identified 2000 years later.

buildings!" (Mark 13:1), the huge ashlar at the Wailing Wall and elsewhere bear mute testimony today to the accuracy of the New Testament record.

That Herod's son, Herod Antipas, ruled Galilee is shown in similar digs at Sepphoris and Tiberias, where a stadium he built has just been discovered. Coins from these and other Herodian rulers are a commonplace in numismatics.

As for Jesus' public ministry, parts of the foundation of the synagogue at Capernaum where he taught still exist below the present ruins of the fourth-century synagogue there. The remains of Peter's house at Capernaum, where Jesus cured the paralytic let down through the roof, have been uncovered. The house was later converted into an octagonal Christian sanctuary, and the plaster on its inner walls contain graffiti in nine languages, doubtless inscribed by visiting pilgrims.

In 1986, the hull of a first-century boat that plied the waters of the Sea of Galilee in Jesus' time was discovered buried in newly-exposed sea bottom, since a drought that spring had dropped the lake's water level. Carefully excavated by marine archaeologists, the liberated hull was surrounded by a fiberglass cocoon and brought to a specially constructed pool so that the wood could be resubmerged and not dry to powder. Carbon-14 tests determined that it was c. 2000 years old, in other words, the very sort of craft that Jesus and his disciples used. We now have new information on how Jesus could have slept through a storm during the famous episode of the Stilling of the Tempest (Mark 4:35 ff.), as well as the pillow or cushion on which he slept. The boat hull has since been permeated with preservative resins, and can now be seen at Kibbutz Ginnosar at the northwestern corner of the Sea of Galilee (see Wachsmann, 1988).

Relating to Jesus' final week in Jerusalem, an ancient flight of stairs down to the Brook Kidron has been excavated, doubtless used by Jesus and his disciples on the evening of Maundy Thursday when they made their way to Gethsemane at the base of the Mount of Olives, where ancient olive trees still thrive. An inscription naming his judge on Good Friday, Pontius Pilate, was discovered at Caesarea in 1961, giving the lie to critics in the last century who claimed that Pilate was only a legendary figure (Frova, 1961). The very bones of the chief prosecutor at Jesus' trial, the high priest Joseph Caiaphas, came to light inside an ossuary—a small stone chest for skeletal remains—that was accidentally discovered inside a burial cavern in 1990, the first bones of a biblical personality ever discovered (see Greenhut, 1992, and Reich, 1992).

Equally sensational was the announcement in October, 2002, that another ossuary came to light in Jerusalem—this one, unfortunately empty—with the following Aramaic inscription: *Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui diYeshua*, which translates "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." While Josephus reports some twenty-one well known Jesuses in his day, the combination of that name with those of Joseph and James is unique and startling. The fact that a brother is named along with a father demonstrates that the brother must have been well known. An authentic artifact from the first-century New Testament horizon—the only time Jews used ossuaries—this may very well have housed the bones of Jesus' half brother, James the Just of Jerusalem, whom both Acts 15 and Eusebius also identify as the first Bishop of Jerusalem. He authored the New Testament epistle bearing his name, and was stoned to death by the Sanhedrin in A.D. 62. This is also the first time Jesus' name appears archaeologically—a truly stunning development (Ostling, 2002; see also Josephus, *Antiquities* 20:200 and Eusebius, *Church History* 2:1 ff).

That victims were nailed to crosses, as in Jesus' case, was proven when still

another ossuary was opened north of Jerusalem in 1968, and the heel bones of a 24-to-28-year-old man inside were found transfixated with a seven-inch iron spike. Both leg bones were also broken, exactly as happened to the malefactors crucified on either side of Jesus on Good Friday (Haas, 1970, and Tzaferis, 1985). Burial in tombs closed up with rolling stone disks is more than apparent today in similar sepulchers carved into hillsides in Judea and even Galilee.

In addition, many of the sites in Jesus' ministry, such as Bethsaida, Nazareth, Chorazin, Capernaum, Caesarea Philippi, Bethany, and, of course, Jerusalem are in process of excavation, promising even more archaeological discoveries relating to the life of Jesus. Other sites that Jesus most probably frequented as a youth, such as Sepphoris in Galilee, may well part the curtains on his so-called "silent years" and offer an urban dimension to the essentially rural horizons associated with his ministry. If the past is any precedent, almost all of these will confirm the New Testament accounts.

The archaeological supports in the case of Jesus' greatest follower, Paul of Tarsus, are especially impressive. Ruins in Cyprus, Asia Minor, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome and elsewhere all bear out the many references to Paul in the New Testament.

As hard evidence from the past, "the very stones cry out" the reliability of the biblical record on Jesus. It is amusing to note that many of the last century's most trenchant critics of Jesus and the New Testament refused at first even to consider the results of archaeology—so counter to their opinions was its evidence! Today, no one—friend or foe of the faith—would be stupid enough to hold so foolish an attitude. The best that biblical minimalists, as they are called, can now do is to dispute inscriptions, claim fraudulent "planting" of evidence, or generate time grids that differ radically from archaeological standards.

History and Jesus

Mythical personalities are not involved in authentic episodes from the past, and so, while their names may appear in legend, they are absent in histories. In the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, however, there are many points of tangency between his record in the New Testament and the surrounding history of his times. Just as the Gospels are studded with authentic geographical locations, they are also full of genuine personalities who are well known from secular sources outside the Biblical record, including some that are even hostile to Christianity.

All of the following are New Testament personalities about whom we find even *more* information in purely secular ancient historical records:

- **Roman emperors:** Caesar Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius
- **Roman governors:** Quirinius, Pontius Pilate, Sergius Paulus, Gallio, Felix, Festus
- **Local rulers:** Herod the Great, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, Philip, Herod Agrippa I, Herod Agrippa II, Lysanias, Aretas IV
- **High priests:** Annas, Joseph Caiaphas, Ananias
- **Prominent women:** Herodias, Salome, Bernice, Drusilla
- **Prominent men:** John the Baptist, James the Just, Gamaliel

In some cases, the additional, non-biblical information on these personalities is immense. For example, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-100) supplies about a thousand times as much data on Herod the Great as does Matthew's Gospel.

In other cases, the secular facts are indispensable. Were it not for Josephus, we would not know that the dancing daughter of Herodias who secured the beheading of John the Baptist was named Salome. Everyone assumes, of course, that she is so identified in the Gospels, but she is not.

Again, the New Testament does not tell us what became of Jesus' half-brother, James the Just of Jerusalem, the first bishop of the Christian church (Acts 15). Josephus, however, gives us the details of how he was stoned to death by the high priest Ananas, son of Annas, and the Sanhedrin in A.D. 62 (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20:200).

Twice Josephus refers to Jesus Christ. His second reference concerns the episode involving James, whom he defines as "the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ" (*Antiquities* 20:200). But earlier, in the middle of his reports on Pontius Pilate's administration, Josephus has a longer passage on Jesus. For centuries this has been dismissed as a Christian interpolation, but what is doubtless the original wording—the so-called Agapian version discovered in 1972 by Professor Schlomo Pines of Hebrew University in Jerusalem—has now been restored (Pines, 1971). In view of its importance, the entire passage follows:

At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has

not disappeared to this day (*Antiquities* 18:63)¹

Other non-biblical, non-Christian ancient references to Christ occur in the pagan Roman authors Cornelius Tacitus (*Annals* 15:44), Gaius Suetonius (*Divus Claudius* 25), and Pliny the Younger (*Letter to Trajan*), as well as in the Jewish rabbinical traditions.

Traces of the Miraculous

The last, in fact, even admit that there was a supernatural dimension involved in Jesus' ministry! John's Gospel tells us: "Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where Jesus was should let them know, so that they might arrest him" (11:57). We may have some idea of how the arrest notice read. A rabbinical tradition recorded in the Talmud spells out an indictment against Yeshu Hannotzri (Hebrew for "Jesus the Nazarene"):

He shall be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and lured Israel into apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf. Anyone who knows where he is, let him declare it to the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (The Mishnah tractate, *Sanhedrin* 43a).

The reference to stoning rather than crucifixion is extremely credible. The future tense is used: Jesus had not yet been arrested, and had he been seized anywhere or anytime the Romans were not present, he would most probably have been stoned to death, as in the case of Stephen (Acts 7). Earlier attempts to terminate Jesus had involved stoning, and had the notice said instead, "He shall be crucified," most scholars would discount it entirely as written after the fact.

Furthermore, the reference to "sorcery" is quite remarkable. By definition, sorcery is something extraordinary or supernatural accomplished with help "from below." A miracle is the same, though achieved with help "from above." In both cases, however, the supernatural is conceded. This admission gains even greater importance from the fact that it comes from a hostile source. Positive testimony in a negative or hostile context becomes self-authenticating, an "admission against interest" in legal terms. It would have been understandable if the rabbinic traditions against Jesus had not mentioned the supernatural dimension at all, or regrettable if they had lied about it or denied it, but in honestly conceding it, they provided very powerful external evidence for the preternatural in Jesus' case.

This arrest notice also totally accords with the Gospel accounts of how Jesus'

¹See also Maier, ed. (1994), *Josephus -- The Essential Works*, 269-70; 282-85.

enemies responded to his miracles by claiming that they were accomplished not through God but Beelzebul (Luke 11:17; Cf. Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22.). It was the only way they could try to neutralize the powerful impact Jesus' miracles had on the people of his day. Clearly, then, this notice is strong evidence for the miraculous.

Other traces of the supernatural dimension in Jesus' ministry appear in the topography or nomenclature in the Holy Land. Bethany, where Lazarus was raised from the dead, according to John 11, is still called "Betanya" by Israelis. But to the majority Arab population of that Jerusalem suburb, the name of the town is El-Lazariyeh, "The Place of Lazarus." That name change was known as far back as Eusebius (A.D. 260-339), the "father of church history," which is what one might indeed expect if Bethany had witnessed so great a wonder as the dead being raised (*Onomasticon*).

A similar instance is a southwestern suburb of Damascus. To this day, that location at the edge of the Syrian capital is named Deraya—"The Vision" in Arabic—because of what happened to Saul (the future St. Paul) at his conversion on the Damascus Road (Acts 9). And this is despite the fact that the

If the resurrection truly did happen, the tomb must have been empty as its first symptom. And from non-biblical, rabbinical, and strong circumstantial evidence, Jesus' sepulcher can be proven to have been empty on that Sunday morning.

overwhelming majority of Islamic Arabs in Damascus are hardly defenders of the Christian faith! While these topographical examples do not themselves *prove* the miraculous events at these places, they surely are instances of "fallout" from something quite explosive that must have occurred.

In terms of the ultimate sign—Jesus' own resurrection—the Easter Gospels and the even earlier records in Paul's epistles provide powerful circumstantial evidence. The transformation of the apostles from depressed disciples to courageous conquerors for Christ would be impossible had they hatched the story of his resurrection, since "myths don't make martyrs." The conversion of many Jewish priests (Acts 6:7), the shift from the Sabbath to Sunday as the day of worship, the existence of the church itself, and many other circumstantial proofs are familiar enough to Christians.

The *non-Biblical* evidence for the *empty tomb*, however, is quite intriguing. Neither the Gospels nor the early church paid much attention to the empty tomb because it paled in significance when compared with the resurrection. But if the resurrection truly did happen, the tomb must have been empty as its first symptom. And from non-biblical, rabbinical, and strong circumstantial evidence, Jesus' sepulcher can be proven to have been empty on that Sunday morning (see Maier, 1997, p. 197ff). To be sure, an empty tomb does not prove a resurrection, but the reverse is certainly true: you can't have a genuine resurrection without a vacant tomb.

Clear evidence that Christianity developed because of the resurrection comes also from Josephus. In his famous earlier passage on Jesus, the Jewish historian states that the apostles "...reported that [Jesus] had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive" (*Antiquities* 18:63).

The Roman pagan historian, Tacitus, referring to Jesus' death (and probably his resurrection) states that the Christian "superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself [Rome]" (*Annals* 15:44).

Accordingly, the sum total of the geographical, archaeological, and historical-literary evidence from the ancient world dramatically supports the New Testament record not only on the absolute historicity of Jesus, but also on crucial aspects of his extraordinary ministry. All teachers should be firm on this, and, I think, communicate it to their pupils and students early on. The many points of tangency between the biblical and non-biblical evidence show corroborative correlation in nearly every instance, the secular facts from the ancient world easily supporting the sacred records. Those who claim otherwise are sadly misinformed, tragically closed-minded, or dishonest.†

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50 Years Ago in *Lutheran Education*

“If world citizenship is to be taught the youth of today only with the end in view of producing an American brand of world conquest, then God pity America. But America walking humbly with her God—what a challenge to the future for the realization of all the fondest hopes for such a corporate body as the United Nations organization. But if this is to be realized, then higher education in America needs to be implemented with the highest learning which man can achieve: to walk humbly with his God.”

W. A. Poehler, “The Highest Learning for Such a Time as This,”
Lutheran Education, March 1953

Two Letters

Dear Principal,

What's going on at that school of yours? My son came home this afternoon and told me he was punished for something he supposedly did in school today. He told me he was innocent. Why is it always my son and not anybody else? I'm not saying he's an angel, but I know my own child. He's really a good kid. And he's intelligent, too. Can't you guys control him? I sent him to your school to get him away from some of those kids in the public school. It seemed like there were always fights and complaints about him doing things there. Now he's having problems at your school, too. I thought you had a Christian school.

I'm a busy person. I'm a single parent and get home late at night. I don't have the time to run up to the school every time there's a problem, so I expect you to take care of things. Make sure he gets a fair shake. Like I told you, he's a good kid.

I work ten-hour days. It's tough out there in the real world. It must be nice to work in a place that just runs from 9 to 3 each day like you do at school.

I need to meet with you so we can get this thing straightened out.

Sincerely,

An irate parent

Dear Principal,

Some of those school parents certainly are a frustration for you, just as they are for me. They are, however, my children, and we'll both need to treat them that way.

When I put you in the position as principal, I did it because I had faith in you. I still do. Dealing with parents like these can be a challenge, but remember what I said to you through the writing of the apostle Paul. I promised that I wouldn't give you anything more than what you could handle.

I've got some advice for you. First, parents like these have their own problems. They're projecting their anger about other things onto you. While it's human to be annoyed by the situation, don't allow yourself to become angry.

Your role is to help them as well as their children. One way to help is by being a good listener. Sometimes the best thing you can do is to let them talk. It can be therapeutic for them. Often parents simply want you to listen as they unload their baggage. Make sure your body language indicates to them that

they have your full attention. As you listen, don't interrupt them. Don't cut them off with words like "but." Doing so gets both you and the parent into an argumentative mode. The best way to avoid an argument is not to argue.

When you speak, be calm, objective, factual, and reassuring. Doing that isn't easy, especially when the things the parent has said are inaccurate and unfair. Try to help the parent focus on the main issue. Steer the conversation away from peripheral issues. Try to sum up in a sentence or two what the parent's main point is, then ask if your summary is correct. Doing so helps both of you.

I know you've heard the saying, "Perception is reality." Remember that even though a parent may be going on false information, what they perceive to be true is very real to them. Do your best to empathize with them.

Show support for the teachers involved. Help the parent to view things from the teacher's point of view. That may be hard to do, but do your best.

Avoid saying anything that could be construed as a threat. Don't let anything you say be used by the parent as additional fuel for the fire. It is tempting to exploit the parent's vulnerabilities. Saying something which draws attention to the parent's past failures would probably feel good, but it would do nothing to help the situation.

If the parent is upset because of a mistake you've made, admit your fault. You have nothing to gain by trying to cover up your blunder. You do remember Ananias and Sapphira, don't you?

Don't spend a disproportionate amount of time on the events that have already occurred. Begin to work toward solutions as quickly and constructively as possible. For their own good, make sure the parents are given responsibilities in monitoring their children's progress, also. Follow through on the course of action you've plotted with the parent. Make sure you do what you promised you would do.

My followers are willing to be taken advantage of, even though doing so can hurt. They go the second and third and fourth mile with people. But at the same time, be firm with parents. They'll respect you for it. Make it clear that there are consequences for inappropriate actions. As tactfully as you can, let them know that they too are accountable.

Problems with parents are a hassle, but they're also an opportunity to demonstrate how my disciples deal with difficult situations. As you interact with both the parent and the child, model the kinds of behavior I desire from everyone. Be aware that your actions speak far louder than your words.

Harbor no resentment toward the parent. Forgive. Remember that I've been forgiving you all along. You'll get through this, my servant. Keep the faith, both when you feel as though you've failed and when you feel like you've succeeded. As I told you before, I put you into the position as principal because I have faith in you. You're not in this by yourself. We both have a vested interest in your work. Keep in mind that I've been strengthening people who come to me in prayer for thousands of years now. I won't forget about you.

Sincerely,

A loving God

Reclaiming Our Mission

Why are we here? Why does the church exist on earth? What does it mean to be the church on earth? These are important questions.

St. Paul writes in Colossians 1:24, “Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.” Did you catch that? Paul said he was going to fill up or complete in his flesh (depending upon translations) what was lacking in Christ’s afflictions.

As Lutheran Christians, this verse can cause us to do a double take: “lacking in Christ’s affliction”? Is Paul suggesting that Jesus’ suffering and death were not sufficient for our salvation? Is there still something we must do in order to be saved?

Upon a closer reading of the text and in the context of the verses that follow, we discover that the answer is “No!” There was and is nothing lacking in Christ’s work of salvation. His suffering and death were and are completely sufficient. Amen! What Paul sought to complete, that which was lacking in Christ’s affliction, had nothing and has nothing to do with the *work* of salvation, but it had and has everything to do with the *proclamation* of salvation. Not everyone has heard or knows what Christ has done and the gift God freely offers them.

I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. (Col. 1:25-29)

This is our purpose. If God loves us and wants the very best for us, if heaven (whatever heaven is) is far better than anything we can experience here on earth, and if those of us who know Jesus as savior are already saved, then why are we still here? We

are here to complete what is lacking in Jesus' affliction, namely, to bring the gospel message to everyone we can. This is the reason we are the church on earth, rather than in heaven.

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Rom. 10:14-17)

Our primary purpose on earth is not to *go to church* to worship God. Our primary purpose is not to go to Bible studies to learn about God. Our primary purpose is not even to defend the gospel. Rather our primary purpose is to *be the church*, to be the Body of Christ, that is the means through which he continues to be incarnate/enfleshed on earth. If worship was our primary purpose, we might as well be in heaven for we will be able to worship in heaven without the distractions of the world. While on earth our primary purpose is to give witness to Christ's completed work of redemption. Paul writes, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

As the church, the body, the incarnation of Christ, we are the means by which Jesus continues to be enfleshed in the world to bring his saving gospel to bear on the lives of those about us. We become his ambassadors, his presence.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

Too often, as the church we have become too caught up in taking care of our own, becoming spiritually fat and lazy, rather than spending ourselves in behalf of the lost. This in effect would be like Jesus taking care of himself rather than giving of himself.

For God so loved the world that he gave . . . (John 3:16)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Phil. 2:3-8)

Those of us who are engaged in professional church work need to see ourselves not as the primary ministers of the parish, but rather as the equippers of ministers, that is, the laity. It is only as the laity are actively engaged that the lost will be effectively reached.

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ . . . (Eph. 4:11-12, NRSV)

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph. 4:16)

May those of us who are professional church workers never lose sight of our primary purpose—the equipping of the saints for the works of ministry—and that the church’s primary ministry is to communicate the gospel in word and deed, not only to those within the church but primarily to those who are not yet a part of the church, those who are still lost.✠

Real Care

Time for celebration! The long search is over. The process involved countless hours of planning, dozens of telephone interviews, several meetings extending into long hours of the night, and a handful of weekends involving leaders, staff, congregation members, and helpful partners of the community. What a blessing that God has led the congregation to arrive at a decision to extend a call to the right person for the position. Even more of a blessing is that the individual has been led to accept the call and will begin the school year as a new member of the ministry team. This is truly a time to rejoice!

Among the many details associated with a smooth transition of a church worker into a new environment is setting up the person's benefits package. In an ideal situation, the new employee has a good idea of what to expect: salary, health plan, retirement plan, and vacation and leave policy are just a few of the important areas to be addressed. Every detail contributes to the worker's well-being. How the individual is compensated, supported, and generally cared for contributes to a healthy, long-lasting ministry. The relationship between employer and employee in churchwork is more than just dollars and cents. It is an understanding that the qualifications, the dedication, and the service of the professional educator in Lutheran ministry are worth at least what is commonly accepted in the secular world, especially when the conditions of work are somewhat challenging. It's an expression of investment in an individual's long-term commitment to ministry—an expression of care.

Congregations, high school associations, higher education institutions, and other employers of churchworkers often neglect to consider the extent to which called and contracted workers depend upon adequate support. When salaries of many workers—especially teachers—are already well below those of similarly trained and comparably experienced counterparts in the public system, they look to other benefits that help to ensure their own and their family's health and financial security. Retirement and disability benefits, investment options such as tax-sheltered annuities, and family health plans are all examples of support for church workers that have been appreciated and valued over the years. In fact, workers have come to depend upon such benefits as a part of their ministry.

In recent years, however, employers have faced significant fiscal challenges. Revenue sources are often diminished, investments are in doubt, and the cost of benefits such as

Today's Lutheran Educator
by Jonathan Laabs, Executive Director of the Lutheran Education Association

health care are going through the roof. The first temptation under these conditions is to reduce benefits. Despite their desire to care for their dedicated workers, congregations and other employers often react to the financial pressures with decisions that affect people's real lives. Tough decisions certainly need to be made. But the all-too-real fact is that care for the worker is often compromised in the process.

Real care—despite the realities of the economy that both employers and employees face together—involves more than economic decisions. Real care is relational. It's all about people. It involves the honest, open, and practical actions and interaction that result in a common objective: the health and wellness of the Church's most precious resources—its workers.

Employers of educators in Lutheran ministries must ask some key questions *before* decisions are made regarding the workers' financial and health concerns:

- How do our pay scale and benefit plans compare to those recommended by districts and community agencies?
- Where does the care for our workers fall into the overall stewardship emphasis of the congregation, institution or agency?
- Are decisions about benefits plans made *first* on the basis of our workers' needs and secondarily on financial considerations?
- How do we communicate with our workers? In what ways are they involved in studying, discussing and deciding upon benefits packages? Do we *listen*?
- What strategies do we have to offset any additional costs incurred by workers as a result of our saving money through choice of health plan?
- Are we adequately caring for our workers and providing for them the support and benefits worthy of their calling?

It's not about the amount of money. It's not about the type of plan. It *is* about *real care*: doing what is necessary and appropriate for those chosen to serve in Lutheran educational ministries. It's an investment in the future of Lutheran education.✠

When All the World Is a Tuxedo, and You Feel Like a Pair of Brown Shoes

We all have days like that. When plans go sour. When people disappoint us. When we feel like that airline commercial, and we just “want to get away from it all”!

You think you’ve about had it “up to here”? Listen to these stories:

1. There was a case in an intensive-care ward where patients always died in the same bed, on Sunday morning, at about 11:00 a.m.. No one could solve this mystery. World-renowned experts came in to study this terrible phenomenon. And then, just as the clock struck 11:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning, Pookie Johnson, the part-time custodian, came in and unplugged the life support system so that he could use the vacuum cleaner!
2. A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen shaking frantically, with a wire running from his waist toward the electric stove. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current, she whacked him with a frying pan, breaking his arm. Up to that moment, he had been happily listening to his Walkman.
3. The average cost of rehabilitating a seal (not the Wheat Ridge kind!) after the Valdez oil spill was \$80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the saved animals were being released back into the wild, amid loud applause. A minute later, in full view, a killer whale ate both of them!

We can all relate to these and our own stories! It’s like my friend who says, “In case of an accident . . . I’m not surprised!”

What’s happened to you recently? Ever lecture your family to be careful while they are eating . . . and then spill your ice tea all over yourself? I did! I once was invited to Australia to speak to a Pastor-Educator Conference on the theme, “How to Stay Healthy,” and, when I got there, they had to cancel it because I got shingles! Brown shoes? You bet!

But there is Good News, especially at times like these. It’s all about our Lord, Jesus Christ, and what he has done for us.

Multiplying Ministries
by Rich Bimler

It is precisely at our “down” times in life that he comes to pick us up, by his death on the cross and his resurrection on Easter! Our Lord continues to prove his love for us in our daily lives!

Take a look at the Scriptures this week and be comforted and renewed by the Good News of hope and forgiveness which our Lord gives to us. Be affirmed in him as the Word reveals that our Lord comes to us in this “tuxedo” world and moves us in and through the heartbreak, the disappointments, the failures that we all experience.

Romans 8:38, for example, hits our situations squarely: “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers . . . will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” And we could add from our own experiences, “neither our failures, nor our spills, nor even Pookie Johnson, can separate us from God’s love and hope and peace and promise!”

A pair of brown shoes in a tuxedo world? Not a problem! The Lord is still in control! The Lord will see us through!

Yes, “you can’t keep a good man down!” Thank God for Resurrection Joy!✠

“Skill without imagination is craftsmanship and gives us many useful objects such as wicker picnic baskets. Imagination without skill gives us modern art.”

Tom Stoppard

The First Spanking

I know of no other topic mentioned so frequently around a school than the subject of discipline. My own school is currently examining its policies and practices and, of course, that process leads each individual to take stock. A familiar text, Genesis 3:8-4:1, enlightened me recently. It's worth rereading:

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed

Secondary Sequence

by Craig Parrott, Denver Lutheran High School

Secondary Sequence

on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man."

What did you notice? Did you notice *when* the Father had this conversation with his kids? Did you notice what *kind* of sentences he used? Did you notice what conversations he *avoided*? Did you notice *how* he gives the consequences? Did you notice what he does *after* the incident? I believe these answers give us excellent applications for disciplining students.

First, God had the conversation with Adam and Eve “in the cool of the day.” That phrase implies that it was either in the early morning or in the evening. God did not tarry or delay having the difficult confrontation. Neither should we. As Ecclesiastes 8:11 warns, “When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.” Love moves boldly toward our neighbor caught in a sin.

Second, the first four sentences from God are all questions. The truthful answers are convicting. The spotlight is focused on the children and their behavior.

Third, God doesn’t fall for the attempted strawman issues presented by the wrongdoers. My flesh—as it does too often with students—would have defended itself. “Afraid? Why are you afraid of me? I care about you! Do you know why I gave you the woman? Do you know how long that operation took? With what care I created her?” But those conversations never occurred. God was more concerned with reconciling these sinners than he was with protecting his reputation.

Fourth, I also do not see long, drawn out-speeches. Our Father gets right to the point. “Because you _____, now this will happen.” Our Divine Disciplinarian uses action and not mere words. As we are reminded in Proverbs 29:19, “A servant cannot be corrected by mere words; though he understands, he will not respond.” And the few words used suggest a matter-of-fact tone in his voice.

Lastly, God wastes no time in continuing to show love to his wayward children. He immediately sets out to make clothes for them, prevents them from eating from the tree of life, and allows them to bear children. Thus concludes the first Old Testament cycle of sin-judgment-grace. Our Father gives hugs after he spansks. His love endures forever.

I want to discipline as God did in the garden. I want to react as he did, regardless of the response of the offender. I want to ask piercing questions: “Why do you insist on wearing that? Do you know what your actions say to others? How do your actions affect others?” By his spirit of grace at work within me, I am sure there will be times when my experience will approximate that of Genesis 3:8-4:1. But I am also sure that there will be times when I will do the opposite. At such times, may I be reminded of my sinfulness and his mercy and love toward me.†

Communication in the Classroom

Children's early language development is a marvel and a delight to most adults. Parents and grandparents take note of new words, new ways to communicate ideas, new and interesting questions that children ask.

Teachers, too, need to note the progress of communication skills in the children they teach. Children's language provides a window into children's thinking. In fact, language and thinking are reciprocal processes that fuel each other and propel children into new levels of thinking and language.

Speaking and Listening

Children's language begins with the oral, concentrating on the ears and the mouth. Children use their ears to listen to the language around them. Even the language they hear through the womb is important!

Children's ability to speak is dependent on the languages they hear. Their inborn thirst for communication motivates them to mimic the sounds they hear and to engage in the give-and-take of speaking and listening. God has created each of us to be a social creature who both gives and receives information and ideas from others.

Children learn language through practice. They need ongoing opportunities to both speak and listen. That means that classrooms must provide opportunities for that speaking and listening.

Children Talking to Children

The most powerful experience for learning language is children talking with each other. That kind of talking requires both time and activities that are designed for children to work and play together.

Children need time to practice communication with each other without the control or even influence of the adults in the classroom. Play activities and collaborative tasks encourage children to practice language as a functional part of their work or play.

All teachers of toddlers and three year olds spend time each day encouraging children's language with phrases such as "use your words." That encouragement empowers young children to both give and get information through communication.

Reading to and with Young Children

While skilled reading and writing are beyond the reach of most preschoolers, the foundations for reading and writing are built much earlier than most people think. As young children see others reading and engage in enjoying books with adults, they begin to understand how those squiggles on the page might work.

Children's enjoyment of books provides the motivation to begin to attend to the details of print and of deciphering its meaning. Patricia Cunningham has written that young children need to experience lap reading—being read to one-on-one—for 1,000 hours before they are fully ready to go read on their own. That translates into 30 minutes each day from birth through kindergarten!

The child's experience with books both at home and at school is the single most important ingredient in learning to read. The next most important ingredient is the child's emerging understanding of the purpose and power of becoming a reader. Learning to read is hard work. For young children to be motivated to engage in that hard work, they need to understand what reading is and how it can serve their learning.

All children are born curious. The fire of curiosity fuels their exploration of the world. As they discover that reading and books can support that exploration and quest for knowledge, they will add the quest of that skill to their list of things and skills to explore.

Writing and Young Children

Like reading, writing is a skill that develops over time, beginning long before either children or adults are fully aware of it. Their attention to scribbling, to using painting and drawing implements, and even to using their fingers to manipulate small objects all build skills that later lead to the physical skills needed in writing. Since writing develops over time, it is important that children have the opportunity to practice the physical activities that will support that skill.

The second half of writing is the concept of written communication and of composing that communication. Young children do that as they tell stories, draw pictures that are visual stories, and then narrate those pictures. As they dictate stories that teachers write down, they continue to build experiences and concepts that support their development of writing skills.

Supporting Communication

In all classrooms, children need reasons to communicate and content for that communication. The task of the teacher is to give children both the opportunity and the encouragement to communicate. Children need practice. Children need purpose. Children need to participate in their own learning. As children practice purposeful communication, they develop the skills needed throughout their learning careers.†

Michael L. Peterson. (2001). *With All Your Mind: A Christian Philosophy of Education*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Book Reviews

In the opening chapter of his text, Michael Peterson states that the purpose of this study is “to articulate a viable understanding of a Christian worldview, put it in interaction with other worldviews, and show how it provides a more helpful framework for thinking about education” (pp. 9-10). The author attempts to fulfill his stated purpose by reviewing the metaphysical (assumptions about reality), epistemological (assumptions about knowledge), and axiological (assumptions about value) tenets of the three traditional philosophies of education which attempt to provide a comprehensive or total worldview: idealism, naturalism, and Thomistic realism. The assessment of each of these philosophies is somewhat brief but adequate for the purpose of the text and would serve as a good review of the historical philosophies of education.

Peterson next presents the basic components of what he identifies as contemporary philosophies of education, namely experimentalism, existentialism, philosophical analysis, and postmodernism, none of which provides a total worldview. He presents the implicit components of each worldview and evaluates their impact on education.

In evaluating experimentalism, Peterson recognizes that this philosophy’s claim that the nature of reality is beyond human grasp is problematic for those who hold to an orthodox Christian worldview, which he understands to assert that “the cosmos is created by a supreme spiritual being, governed by certain unchanging moral principles, and made to be a kind of prelude to eternity” (p. 62). For the experimentalist, truth is always relative to some individual or group and is never absolute.

Peterson’s assessment of existentialism and postmodernism includes his recognition of these philosophies’ denial of objective truth and meaning to life and their emphasis on individualism and relative truth.

Peterson bases his Christian philosophy of education on what he identifies as an orthodox Christian worldview which recognizes two dimensions of reality: God the Creator and the real, rational, and good world, his creation. With biblical creation as a foundation, Peterson unfolds the metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological components of his philosophy.

After responding to current issues in educational theory—including the relationships between liberal learning, general education, and professional education; the integration of faith and learning; ethics and values education; and the nature of pedagogy—Peterson applies his philosophy to current issues in educational practices: public versus private education, academic rights and freedom, multiculturalism, and the impact of technology on the content and delivery of education.

Peterson's Christian philosophy of education finds its expression in the development and nurture of "the Christian mind." For Peterson, Christian thinking is integrated around the following eight Christian characteristics:

1. It assumes a theistic and supernaturalistic frame of reference: "Although it endorses nature and history as valuable and meaningful, it places them in the larger context of God's care and providence."
2. It is creational in outlook: "It understands that reality is divided into two broad domains: the Creator and the creation. . . . When we realize that everything is a creature, it opens our minds to the fact that everything has the capacity to teach us something about God, the Creator."
3. It possesses an incarnational perspective: "A fundamental motif in Christian theology is that God identifies himself intimately with humanity."
4. It has a sacramental orientation toward life: "We must be able to recognize that a multitude of mundane objects, activities, and relationships can mediate God's grace to us."
5. It has a deep regard for the human person: "It is an essential trait of the Christian mind to place a value on personhood incommensurate with all other values."
6. It has a concept of truth: "Judaean-Christian theism teaches that truth is based on the way things are—the way things are with God and with created order."
7. It has a recognition of evil: "While it acknowledges the supreme goodness and absolute power of God, and while it affirms the intrinsic goodness of the creation, Christian theism regards the world as being under the shadow of evil. Human beings, individually and collectively, cause evil in many forms."
8. It has a keen sensitivity to the sufferings of others: "Clearly, human beings do not simply commit evil acts; they also suffer evil of various sorts. Injustice, disease, deformity, natural disaster, and death just begin the endless list."

Peterson's appreciation of Thomistic realism is evident throughout the text as he articulates his Christian philosophy of education. The author states, "Amid signs that Thomism is again experiencing a resurgence, I believe that the time is right for seriously considering its ideas in educational philosophy today" (p. 47). Although this philosophical system initially seems attractive to conservative Christian thinkers, it is inadequate in its limited perspective on ways of knowing. Occasionally Peterson exaggerates the power of reason when he maintains that true doctrines of the Church are the product of reason or are at least subject to reason's certification. In his evaluation of existentialism, Peterson writes, "Although the recognition that there are limitations to reason is good in certain regards, a view that reason is impotent and

ineffective in matters of faith excludes a vital human quality from one of the most important areas of life" (p. 71). The author's commitment to what he identifies as orthodox Christianity is commendable, but it limits his commitment to what is reasonable. Although he wants to see the supernaturalistic frame of reference in Christian thinking, one finds no reference to the work of Holy Spirit. Once one is able to acquire a Christian worldview through the work of the Spirit, one is able to appreciate Peterson's preoccupation with creation as the basis for establishing a philosophy of education. General revelation in nature and history are indeed sources of knowledge about the Creator, but without faith in Jesus Christ, they only reveal the hidden God.

Peterson is but one more voice in the conversation on Christian philosophies of education. His writing style and argumentation are commendable and represent his faith tradition. What is needed in this conversation is a voice that articulates a Lutheran philosophy of education.✠

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"Passive acceptance of the teacher's wisdom is easy to most boys and girls. It involves no effort of independent thought, and seems rational because the teacher knows more than his pupils; it is moreover the way to win the favour of the teacher unless he is a very exceptional man. Yet the habit of passive acceptance is a disastrous one in later life. It causes man to seek and to accept a leader, and to accept as a leader whoever is established in that position."

Bertrand Russell

A Final Word

by George C. Heider, President

What's Lutheran about Lutheran Education?

So what is Lutheran education? I don't mean teaching the Lutheran faith. That's catechesis. Nor do I mean the teaching of Lutherans. That can happen in many ways and places. Rather, what is Lutheran (if anything) about the education that happens in institutions ranging from Lutheran pre-schools to Lutheran universities?

Wiser men and women than I have wrestled at length with this question through the years, and that's no doubt the reason, at least in large part, why the editors of *Lutheran Education* chose to title this issue, "*Toward a philosophy of Lutheran education.*" But let me suggest at least one promising approach. Part of the essence of Lutheran education is surely that it is always in process, always penultimate, never final or perfect. Education is conditioned by the finitude of all involved, and Lutherans know very well that we stand as creatures who may well (at least since the Fall) know good and evil, but never completely.

One of the corollaries of this observation is to provide a natural rationale for lifelong education. We can never be done with learning at any age. Another is that Lutheran education is by definition inclusive. Lutherans hold strong beliefs in matters of theology, but in all fields they acknowledge that they have much to learn, however much they have to offer. Lutheran education means lots of listening and critical sorting, and that requires respectful interaction with the Other.

A final observation (for now) also follows from the admittedly temporal and tempered nature of our knowing: Lutheran education is eschatological. That is, it is focused on an end beyond itself, beyond those involved, and even beyond this world. All of our teaching and learning is in some way conditional, but it is also aware of that which is not. In other words, Lutheran education is practical (or vocational), in that it calls learners to live for a purpose greater than themselves: their neighbor and, ultimately, their God.✠